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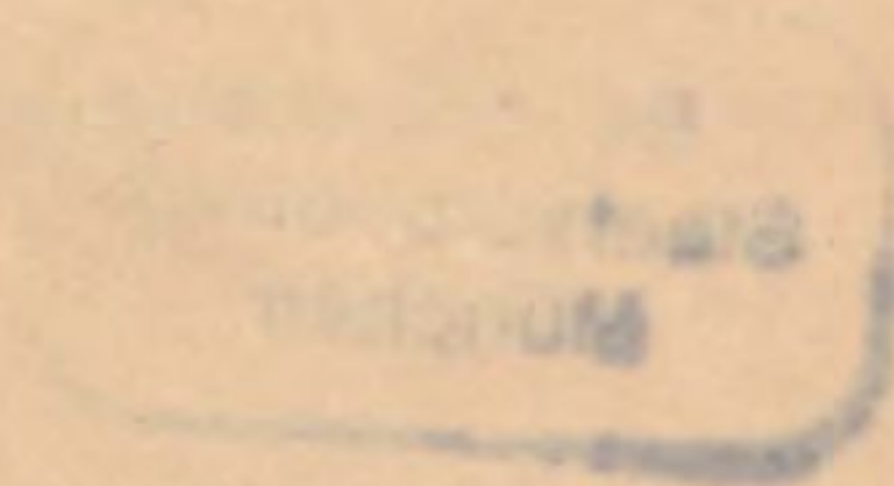
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CATHOLIC AND EVANGELICAL
PRINCIPLES.



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CATHOLIC AND EVANGELICAL
PRINCIPLES,

VIEWED IN THEIR PRESENT APPLICATION

TO THE

CHURCH OF GOD,

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

BY ALFRED BARRETT,

AUTHOR OF THE PRIZE ESSAY ON THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

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INTRODUCTION.

IF the Author must fall into the fashion of those who deem it necessary to make an apology to the public for any production of their pen which they present, it must content him to say,—and he hopes the avowal will satisfy all candid men,—that his single aim in presenting these letters in their present form, has been to do good. In his hope of attaining this object to the full extent of his wishes, he may fail, as others have failed before him; yet he cannot help but think that a sincere adherence to this aim on his part, and on the part of Christian writers generally, notwithstanding the ignorance and prejudice of human nature, will always more or less diminish the strife and contention, and consequent misery of the world. This aim has led the author to avoid abuse and railing, and to abstain from imputing unholy motives to those from whom he seriously differs, and whose opinions he regards as highly unscriptural and dangerous.

It is one of the most striking religious features of the present period, that all Christians are awaking to a deep conviction that Christianity ought by this time to stand out before the world in a form of far greater UNITY, BEAUTY, and ENERGY, than that in which it at present appears, and that the divided state of the Church is miserably retarding the happiness and salvation of the world.

Every distinct part of the universal Church however presents its own terms of unity, and holds every particular of those terms with differing degrees of tenacity. In this state of things it is a most vital matter that we should not perplex the solemn questions of truth and right, by the introduction of jealousies and the spirit of party.

Religious doctrine must be viewed in a religious and Christian temper, just as a transparent firmament is viewed through a transparent lens. The Christian Church is divided not only in affection but in opinion—the one ground of disunion being chiefly the cause of the other; and therefore some portions of it are to some extent in error. Our chief hope then of a brighter day, will depend upon each portion bringing all its received doctrines into serious and prayerful review, and to the touchstone of God's word: for when these separate results are severally compared

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together, and each with the whole, it is most likely that Truth will leave the low and misty region of passion and pride, and dwell in that "city set on a hill" which cannot be hid.

A. B.

Leeds, Nov. 16th, 1842.

CONTENTS.

LETTER I.

	PAGE.
On the Ministerial Succession.....	1

LETTER II.

On the Ministerial Succession	23
-------------------------------------	----

LETTER III.

The Christian Sacraments	43
--------------------------------	----

LETTER IV.

Baptism generally	59
-------------------------	----

LETTER V.

Baptism Grace, but not Regeneration	71
---	----

LETTER VI.

Baptism Grace, but not Regeneration	84
---	----

LETTER VII.

Baptism, the Fathers, and the Church of England.....	107
--	-----

LETTER VIII.

Baptism in relation to Justification	130
--	-----

viii.

LETTER IX.

	PAGE.
The Lord's Supper	148

LETTER X.

The Lord's Supper	161
-------------------------	-----

LETTER XI.

The Ministry of the Word	180
--------------------------------	-----

LETTER XII.

The Ministry of the Word in Relation to Doctrinal Tradition...	196
--	-----

LETTER XIII.

On the Ordinance of Prayer.....	217
---------------------------------	-----

LETTER XIV.

On Christian Parties	233
----------------------------	-----

LETTER XV.

Reverence for Divine Things	242
-----------------------------------	-----

Appendices	260
------------------	-----

CATHOLIC AND EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES.

LETTER I.

The Ministerial Succession.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE ecclesiastical controversies of the present times are so momentous in their character and results, that it highly becomes those who have been put into the Christian ministry to take as serious a survey of them as possible. And the more especially as now the subject of religion, is by the necessity of the case, forced upon the attention of all classes, even upon them who have no part to perform in the sanctuary.

When many minds are rapidly taking up their position in those lines of opinion which converge in the extreme point of infidel Rationalism on the one hand, and of Popery in the other, it becomes our responsible, and yet delightful task, to investigate that form of doctrine which has prevailed so extensively during the last century, which, wherever it has prevailed, has produced fruits of holiness unequalled in any age since that of the Apostles. We may enquire, indeed, whether or not this is the old apostolical religion, and we shall find that our chief instructions in pursuing this enquiry are to be drawn from the apostolical writings themselves. That our system is in danger of being either hindered

or destroyed no one can deny. Principles asserted and taught in the Church of England are rapidly developing themselves and drawing out their details, and those details are Romanist.

The central dogma around which all the doctrines of our gifted opponents revolve is "Apostolical succession" in the ministry,—a doctrine, which, although received according to their several interpretations by all churches, is by this school defined as referring to a line of men ordained in uninterrupted succession by episcopal hands, through whom alone, covenant grace is conveyed, and church unity maintained, irrespective of their personal character. Thus the term "apostolical," as applied to an external order, is made to assume and involve all that is essential to the apostolic character,—all the wisdom, purity, zeal, devotion and love which no one has a right to abstract from it.

We have therefore an argument *per saltum* at the very entrance, and not only at the entrance, but as we shall afterwards find at almost every step of that middle course betwixt Rome and the Reformation through which our opponents would lead us.

The nature of the evangelical ministry is consequently involved in our first enquiries, though it must be obvious to every one, that this is itself involved in the nature of that religion which Christ came to establish upon earth. The Oxford school call their ministers priests, not using the word as a contraction of presbyter or prester, but by the association of the "altar," the "candlestick," and the "sacrifice," making it assert the sacerdotal character of the pastoral office. On the question of the ministry this is one of the chief points in dispute.

It is irreverent, however, to deny that there is a certain analogy between the Jewish priesthood and the Christian ministry, as seems to be admitted by St. Paul himself, 1 Cor. ix. 13. And all men of honest and sincere mind will allow this analogy to have its proper weight. Under the Jewish economy the divine appointment was, that the priesthood should form the ordinary pastorate of the people, which was nothing more than the positive enactment by law, of that which in the patriarchal age was usage. This may be gathered from various scriptures, as from the words of Moses,—“They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law, they shall put incense before thee and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.” Deut. xxxiii. 10. Again, from those of Malachi, “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.” Mal. ii. 7. The king of Israel prays “Let thy priests be clothed with salvation,” 2 Chron. vi. 41., thereby indicating that they were the instruments of conveying that great benefit. Unfaithful priests are reprov’d for neglecting their teaching office,—“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me.” Hos. iv. 6. Still further,—“Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God and without a teaching priest.” 2 Chron. xv. 3. And in the book of Ezekiel it is more than probable that the awful comminations of the prophet contained in the 34th chapter, are directed against this class here termed shepherds or pastors: the imagery of the chapter supports this view.

Yet although the priests are seen to have been the

ordinary pastors of the Jewish church, it is evident God raised up an extraordinary class as well, partly for the purpose of calling a declining priesthood and people to repentance, and partly for unfolding those visions of the Holy One which related to Christ's coming kingdom and the social convulsions which were connected with that event. Some, indeed, of these extraordinary teachers exercised priestly functions, as Elijah, when he offered sacrifice in the contest with the priests of Baal, and thus became priest against priest; and by those miraculous signs which he and others of his class exhibited, the prophetic calling was as much attested as if they belonged to that successive and regular line of priests from which several extraordinary and eminent pastors were themselves likewise raised. Such, for instance, as Samuel, who was the son of Elkanah, the Levite; as Jeremiah the priest, who said "I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee;" Chron. xvii. 16, as Ezra, likewise, the reformer and restorer of the Jewish Church, a pastor and preacher too. Thus there was an ordinary and extraordinary vocation. The priests were the *cleri* of the Jewish people, for the Lord was their *κληρος*—their lot or inheritance; (*ἐγὼ μερίς σου καὶ κληρονομία σου ἐν μέσῳ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ*; LXX. Numb. xviii. 20.) yet the prophets occasionally administered their ordinances, and always were the immediate dispensers of the word of God, whether it were generally predictive, or had reference, as in the case of Jonah, to the times in which it was delivered.

In this dispensation, then, there was a teaching office positively established in a hereditary succession of men, though it does not follow that the analogy between it

and the pastoral office in Christianity involves a similitude in this particular; far otherwise, indeed: and yet positively established as this office was, and vested in the hands of certain men, yet the Lord often intruded upon the institute by sending extraordinary individuals to supply their lack of holiness and zeal. When our Lord appeared in person and opened his kingdom on earth, the teaching authority of the priesthood was not revoked, the original order was not disturbed, though the priests, as a body, had fallen from the faith, and did not hold the evangelical meaning of the prophecies, but rather followed a corrupt tradition, and opposed our Lord in all respects in which he was revealed as Messiah. In selecting the heralds of his grace, therefore, our Lord passed them by, and instituted his own apostles and disciples, and thus arose a newly commissioned body; composed, as far as compared with unrevoked precedent, of irregular individuals.

It was not a commission to exercise a new priestly office, for the sacerdotal part of the former pastoral care, if even it might be considered a part, had passed away with the dispensation to which it belonged. And although the Oxford school, following Bp. Taylor and some of the fathers, give to the Christian ministry a sacerdotal character, because ministers do “*διακονοῦντες μεσιτεύειν* stand between God and the people,”* and commemorate by the Eucharist Christ’s sacrifice, and do declare his death and pray to God “in the virtue of it for all the members of the church, and all persons

* Bp. Taylor on the Office Ministerial. Works, ed. 1836. Vol. 3. p. 695.

capable," which they regard "in genere rationis" as a sacrifice, and an instrument of propitiation; yet against all this it must never be forgotten, that ministers of Christ never stand betwixt God and the people in any other wise than as ambassadors and pleaders; and that as an ambassador does not imply a priest, so neither, by any necessity of the case does a pleader: a private Christian may plead as acceptably with God in his family, and in his closet, and refer in his prayer as much to the virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice as the most gifted minister; and St. Peter does not hesitate to call all Christians indiscriminately "a royal priesthood," shewing that as far as offering spiritual sacrifices is concerned, they are as much priests as their pastors are. The administration of the Lord's supper cannot be a sacerdotal act unless we connect it with the doctrines of the mass and of transubstantiation,—monstrosities these, which must be hereafter judged of by their own demerits and presumptuous daring.

The ministerial commission, as given by Christ, was a commission to call and build up the Christian church by the universal dissemination and continued administration of the gospel. This is evident from His own valedictory prayer—"I have given them thy *word*, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy *truth*—thy *word* is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world." John xvii. 15—18.

It is clear then, in the first place, that God, without impugning his wisdom and righteousness, may depart from a previously established order, and that he has

actually done so in the case of the extraordinary preachers of the Old Testament. In the land in which we live the earth is refreshed, and made productive in the ordinary mode by descending showers ; but the God of Providence brings about the same effect in a given instance by the overflow of a running river or stream, and even where established channels are the usual means of irrigation, an overswelling of the waters is reckoned no calamity. In the second place, it is evident that the appointment of Christ's apostles and disciples, judging from the past, was a second irregularity of a similar kind to that of the Jewish prophets ; and thirdly, it will follow that if this appointment of the Apostles was intended to become the foundation of a succeeding order or institute,—that is to say, if it even was intended to form a lineal apostolic succession, exactly of the sacerdotal kind ; the whole analogy of Scripture (to say nothing of the purity of God and the nature of Christ's religion) would justify us in believing, that when the ordinary class of ministers failed to answer the divine purposes, he would raise up another and extraordinary class to arouse their predecessors and save the cause of truth and righteousness : and that these in their turn might become regular also. Hooker, and Bishop Hall, and Bishop Burnet, were too devout students of Scripture not to perceive the truth of these propositions, and accordingly they have conceded their secret approval of them in all those places in which they admit the validity of other than episcopal ordination.*

* “ There may be sometimes very just and sufficient reason to allow of ordination made without a Bishop. The whole church visible being the true

2nd. Having regarded the pastoral institution in the light which is cast upon it by the past conduct of divine Providence, we shall next see that now in the religion of Christ it is positive rather in essence than in form.

The sacerdotal office as held by the Jewish priests, was absorbed in Christ at the very moment when he had completed the work of atonement: He continuing for ever had an unchangeable priesthood, Heb. vii. 24; but as the same Christ was predicted as well to be

original subject of all power, it hath not ordinarily allowed any other than Bishops alone to ordain: Howbeit as the ordinary course is ordinarily in all things to be observed, so it may be in some cases not unnecessary that we decline from the ordinary usages. Men may be extraordinarily, yet allowably, two ways admitted into spiritual functions in the Church. One is when God himself doth of himself raise up any whose labour he useth without requiring that men should authorize them. But then he doth ratify their calling by manifest signs and tokens himself from heaven, and thus even such as believed not our Saviour's teaching did yet acknowledge him a lawful teacher sent from God: thou art a teacher sent from God, otherwise none could do those things that thou doest * * * * Another extraordinary kind of vocation is, when the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the church which otherwise we would willingly keep. Where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor can have possibly a Bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity, the ordinary institution of God hath given oftentimes and may give place. And therefore we are not simply without exception to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continued succession of Bishops in every effectual ordination." *Hooker, Eccles. Poly. B. 7., sec. 14.*

"They (the foreign churches) were by the iniquity of their times, in a manner forcibly driven upon this form, (the Presbyterian,) and necessarily put to their choice whether they would still submit to Popery, or no longer submit to episcopal administration which there was only managed by Popish hands."—*Bp. Hall on Episcopacy, p. 2. s. 3.*

"If a company of Christians find the public worship where they live to be so defiled that they cannot with a good conscience join in it, and if they do not know of any place to which they can conveniently go, where they may worship God purely, and in a regular way;—if, I say, such a body finding some that have been ordained, though to the lower functions should submit

Prophet, Acts iii. 22; and Shepherd or Pastor, Ezekiel xxxiv. 24; which latter title the Apostle Peter especially acknowledged, 1 Peter, ii. 25; it is manifest that the Christian ministerial commission is a commission held under Christ in his office of Prophet and Chief Pastor, or Bishop of souls. Accordingly we shall find that in the New Testament the transmission of ministerial authority is never spoken of as the conveyance of a mere office and dignity, irrespective of the character of those who

itself entirely to their conduct; or finding none of these should by common consent, desire some of their own number to minister to them in holy things, and should upon that beginning grow up to a regulated constitution, though we are very sure that this is quite out of all rule, and could not be done without a very great sin, unless the necessity were great and apparent; yet if the necessity is real and not feigned, this is not condemned nor annulled by the Article."—*Bp. Burnet on the 23rd Article of the Church of England.*

"The learned and pious Archbishop Wake in a letter to Father Courrayer, dated from Croydon House, July 9, 1724, expresses himself thus:—I bless God that I have been born and bred in an episcopal church, which, I am convinced, has been the government established in the Christian church from the very time of the Apostles. But I should be unwilling to affirm, that where the ministry is not episcopal there is no church, nor any true administration of the sacraments. And very many there are among us who are very zealous for episcopacy, yet dare not go so far as to annul the ordinances of God performed by any other ministry."—*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*, 1838, p. 688.

"And to the same effect Archbishop Wake expresses himself in his letter to Le Clerc, on the subject of a union between the Anglican and the Gallican churches.

"Optarem equidem regimen episcopale bene temperatum et ab omni injusta dominatione sejunctum, quale apud nos obtinet, et, siquid ego in his rebus sapiam, ab ipso Apostolorum ævo in ecclesia receptum fuerit, et ab iis omnibus fuisset retentum; nec despero quin aliquando restitutum, si non ipse videam at posterì videbunt. Interim absit ut tam ego ferrei pectoris sim ut ob ejusmodi defectum (sic mihi absque omni invidia appellare liceat) aliquas earum a communione nostra abscindendas credam; aut cum quibusdam furiosis inter nos scriptoribus, eas nulla vera ac valida sacramenta habere, adeoque vix Christianos esse pronuntiem."—*Ibid*, p. 718, *Appendix*.

fill it, but rather as the transmission of the truth through the medium of faithful men ; of the truth, I say, which in the order of God, calls forth those offices which are necessary to its promulgation and preservation.

The passage already quoted from our Lord's valedictory prayer bears full upon this point ; and also the sentiment of St. Paul—"a dispensation of the gospel, (the joyful tidings) is committed unto me," 1 Cor. ix. 17 ; and again, "all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation," 2 Cor. v. 18, 19 ; and also speaking of the One Mediator "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not ;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." 1 Tim. ii. 6—7. To these must be added the following passages :—"O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith," 1 Tim. vi. 20 ; "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Tim. ii. 2.

These are the principal passages where the transmission of the Christian ministry from Christ to His apostles, and from them to their pastoral successors is spoken of, but we cannot find a word which gives any encouragement to the idea, that it is a formal dignity which is transmitted. Respect is had to the work rather than to the office, and when ministers are to be esteemed very highly in love, it is for their work's sake. Faith,

the truth, the things heard, the ministry of reconciliation; all of which phrases imply "the gospel of Christ" are every thing; and the order in which the divine working of the truth called forth the various kinds of ministers necessary; is beautifully exhibited in 1 Cor. xii. 28. "And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." You will remind me here that St. Paul had received "grace and apostleship," which is true, and so had the other apostles as well; but what did that apostleship imply? The authority of one who had received a personal message from Christ,—a message of revealed truth, which authority could not in the nature of things be transferred to another who had never seen the Lord.

Apostleship signifies messengership, and derives its whole value from the truth which it conveys, and of which it is the witness: and if the apostles were Christ's messengers, none could be His messengers in the same sense, when he had ceased in His own person to call men to the work of the ministry, and had committed that function to the Holy Ghost. The great design to be accomplished was the diffusion of gospel truth,—truth never bereft of its concomitant, the Spirit,—and, as I said before, the truth appears as the proximate cause in the production of church offices, for they are as consecutively formed by it, as established channels are by the irruption from a mountain height of some mighty stream. For to recur to the Scripture we have just quoted: God set forth, (for God is truth,) in the first place, apostles, because it was necessary to over-

whelm heathen unbelief and Jewish prejudice with testimonies of the Lord's resurrection, and to provide for the establishment and extension of the church. To this effect added revelations were indispensable, and the church was built upon the rock (*τη πετρα* Peter) of Apostolic doctrine. And the Apostles in order to divest themselves of the care of widows, and in order to be quit of the lighter duties of the Christian charge, appointed both on their own behalf, and on the behalf of their successors, a subordinate class of ministers termed deacons, who acted on all occasions as pastoral assistants. Acts vi. 1—8. 1 Tim. iii. 8.

In the second place prophets, or expositors of Old Testament prophecy as in the Church of Antioch; for the truth required now to be exhibited in all its harmony with the Old Testament revelation, in order to convince mightily both Gentiles and Jews. These too passed away, for prophecies were to cease, as well as that tongues were to fail. Thirdly, teachers; the standing order, who are mentioned last likewise in another enumeration, Eph. iv. 11, and there called pastors and teachers, and elsewhere bishops and elders interchangeably: elders, because they answered to elders who were teachers in the Jewish synagogue; and bishops, because the Holy Ghost had made them (*ἐπισκοποι*) overseers of the flock. These were raised up, because the truth required that those who believed, should have constant care and nurture in the faith, by means of teaching and the administration of the sacraments. And as it was necessary that the order and purity of the church should be preserved, and that the mouths of false teachers should be stopped, and that impenitent

and fallen members should be expelled, and that erring brethren should be censured, and that the ministerial succession should be provided for by constant ordinations; the elders or bishops are appointed to rule, Heb. xiii. 17. With this order the enumeration of church offices ceases; *after these* the apostle places miracles, gifts of healings, and all those temporal appliances which are connected with the dissemination and establishment of the gospel.

If, as the Oxford system would teach, these primitive office-bearers have their continued representatives, where are we to find the representatives of the prophets who are mentioned second in the apostle's enumeration?

No; the truth was provided for in the last mentioned order and their diaconal assistants; and the ministerial office depended upon that truth for its title, meaning, and authority. It was to be committed to faithful men, because no other men would be concerned either for its purity or progress. This was the rule of ordination. And taking the term faithful in its fair and legitimate meaning, as it stands in the Scripture, descriptive of a Christian minister in all the relations in which he is placed, can any thing lessen the authority of this rule? The Tract writers, as you are aware, hasten away from this passage, and such as are like it, anxious to make their escape to traditions of the fathers; but let us not imitate them in this respect; for inspiration is precious. Where human authority is confused and indistinct, let us make the utmost of the infallible word. Can, therefore, the ordination of wicked men abide the test of this scripture. Can the canon of the Holy Ghost be violated in any given formal ordination, and yet the sanction and

authority of the Holy Ghost be asserted? Alas! the truth needed a number of sanctified and successive teachers and heralds, and the Holy Ghost supplied that need by his inward call of individuals, whose claims at the same time were to be tested by the living church. That the ultra high church theory of the ministerial succession, (namely, the theory that the line runs exclusively in a succession of episcopal ordinations, irrespective of personal character) is the true one, appears to me to be strongly contradicted by the entire spirit of St. Paul's epistles. The genealogical system was the system of the former dispensation, and the registers of the priests' names were very important, and required to be preserved, both because they gave a title to the possession of temporal property, and because a standing type of Christ's priesthood had to be kept up. Now, the type was absorbed in the antitype; and, as though the apostle foresaw that there would be an attempt made in the Christian church to introduce the judaizing principle as the ground of ministerial authority, instead of holiness and a divine call, he declares unto Timothy, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith," 1 Tim. i.3, 4; and Titus too he exhorts in terms equally striking and explicit: "Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain," Titus iii. 9. And this was an indirect rebuke of those who were disposed in that day to take the principles of a defunct Judaism and re-apply them to the gospel.

And indeed in those days in which the Church of England had to struggle for existence in its contest with Popery, Bishop Jewell, her defender and apologist, could write thus: "If it were certain that the religion and truth of God, passeth evermore orderly by succession, and none otherwise, then were succession, whereof he (Harding) hath told us so long a tale, a very good substantial argument of the truth. But Christ saith, 'In cathedra Mosis sedent scribæ et pharisæi' (by order of succession): 'the scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' chair.' Annas and Caiaphas, touching succession, were as well bishops as Aaron and Eleazar. Of succession, St. Paul saith to the faithful at Ephesus, 'Scio, quod post discessum meum intrabunt lupi rapaces. Ex vobis ipsis exurgent viri perversa loquentes: 'I know that after my departure hence, ravening wolves shall enter and succeed me: and out of yourselves there shall (by succession) spring up men speaking perversely.' Therefore St. Hierome saith, 'Non sanctorum filii sunt, qui tenent loca sanctorum: 'They be not always the children of holy men, that (by succession) have the places of holy men.'"* In like manner others since the time of Bishop Jewell. When subtle Romanism has been the antagonist, great and good men have always cast themselves upon clear scriptural principles.

3rd. It must, however, my dear sir, be perceived, that the eldership, defined as an office having rule and authority in the church of God, is apostolically sanctioned in 1 Peter v. 2, where it is called *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, "fulfilling

* Jewell's Defence of the Apologie. Works, 1611. P. 120.

the bishopric thereof," or episcopating ; and not only so, but the superiority of one minister over another, or others, is even *divinely* sanctioned ; as in the charge to the several angels of the churches of Asia, who severally answered to the presiding minister of the Jewish synagogue. Here the glorified Saviour expressly commends the angel of the church of Ephesus for a disciplinary act. That there were many elders in that church is evident from St. Paul's address, Acts xx. 28 ; in which address is found a prophetic announcement of what in the Saviour's after charge is declared to have taken place, namely, the rise of wicked and schismatic teachers within the church ; and that the angel or bishop is regarded as having authority over them is evident from the words " thou canst not bear with the evil, and hast tried those which say they are apostles and are not." Rev. ii. 2. Thus we may at least say respecting that kind of episcopacy, which consists in placing conventionally one Christian minister over another, or over many others, that it is scripturally and divinely sanctioned. It does not however follow that diocesan episcopacy, a later arrangement is so sanctioned, whatever may be its practical or abstract wisdom ; neither does it follow that the right of elders to exercise a bishopric over each other is thereby invalidated or denied ; for if it be asserted that Timothy and Titus were commanded to ordain elders, they are no where directed to consecrate bishops,—a lack which is for ever fatal to the Oxford theology.* The Scripture recog-

* Goode's Divine rule. 2 vol. p. 77. That the Apostles appointed the first Bishops in most of the principal churches of the primitive church there can be

nizes both the presbyterian college and the episcopal pastor. St. Paul says to the former, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock," Acts xx. 28, exhorting them to mutual oversight; while Christ himself in an after charge to the same church, addresses his words to the presiding angel, and directs *him* in reality to "take heed" to them.

The *jus divinum* in this case refers to the pastorate itself, and in its most general signification; for as long as the pastoral relation subsists, the obligation to feed is inseparable from the obligation to govern, and, in fact, is almost identical with it; but the form is no subject of divine command, nor whether the government of the people is administered by chief pastors through the medium of elders, or by the elders themselves, equally and directly. This is left to the sanctified wisdom of the collective church, and perhaps still more to the manifest leadings of Divine Providence. The rigid episcopalian, and the rigid presbyterian, have both sought for a *jus divinum*, and as far as Scripture facts, in the absence of a clear precept, constitute one, both have found it. The congregationalist as well, who has explained his congregationalism to be an independent and isolated episcopacy over his own deacons and private people, may so far have deemed his church polity to be represented in Scripture,—though I say nothing as to whether modern independency, as a system in practical application, really does allow of pastoral

little doubt; but the question here is, was it a *sine qua non* to the successors of such Bishops, that they should receive episcopal consecration; or, was it sufficient that a presbyter should be appointed by consent in each church out of their own body to the vacant office? Vide also p. 115.

oversight and control,—or whether there can be the least degree of ministerial subordination admitted in this form, which there must have been, both at Jerusalem and Ephesus. All are agreed in appealing to facts of apostolic times, and which are apostolically sanctioned; and these facts each party (with different degrees of evidence on their side) construe into a *jus divinum*; and rightly, if by that expression they mean a certain amount of divine sanction; but wrongly, if they intend by it an arbitrary and positive law, which forbids any other institution. When St. Paul preached at Ephesus he was without doubt the responsible pastor, the sole dispenser of evangelical doctrine, and the father and governor of the flock which he had gathered; yet probably not even here, independent, in the modern sense of that term, for the apostles seem hardly ever, in matters of grave decision and government, to have acted independently. Acts xv. Gal. ii. Even at Ephesus Paul planted and Apollos watered. Afterwards, when converts were multiplied, and the tending of that flock became too much for one individual, a paramount care for the truth obliged the Apostle to commit it on his departure to that college of elders whom the Holy Ghost had, by his inward call, made overseers for the purpose, and who, without any responsible head, were enjoined to watch over each other, which in that time of simplicity and love, might easily be done: and when these elders themselves multiplied, and according to St. Paul's prediction, (Acts xx. 29,) when men among themselves arose speaking perverse things, and seeking to draw away disciples after them; and when Rev. ii. 2, they "said they were apostles and were not," then there arose an angel of the Church—an episcopal governor—

a centre of authority and order—who, in his official capacity, is approved of by the Lord in glory for his works, labour, patience, and judgment of lying pretenders. As Jerome in his epistle to Evagrius shows that the elders of the Church of Alexandria elected their own bishops up to the time of Heraclas, so it is highly probable that in this way the angel or bishop of Ephesus, and of each of the other Asiatic churches was elected. Thus in the progress of the truth, we have all the forms of church order that have been pleaded for; and although it may be further pleaded, and has been, that episcopal principles can merge and harmonize them all, yet still, unless the requirements of the truth were the proximate cause of every change of office, and of every new office, how was it that the apostles did not establish an episcopacy, but rather a presbytery, in the churches which they finally left, knowing their departure to be final, as in the case of Paul leaving Ephesus?

Collate, my dear sir, the “Acts of the Apostles” with the Epistles, and every thing indicates, that the pastoral office was not intended to form an abstract dignity to be gazed at and revered for its own sake, but that it should be the channel of the gospel; deep or broad, guarded or accessible, as the state of the world, or the exigency of evangelical doctrine might require. Every thing indicates that however some men might admire and love the presbyterian form, and some the episcopal, the one for its energy, the other for its unity, yet, that revealed and apostolic truth was so much greater a thing than either, that at any critical time of danger it might modify both.

The independent pastorate is necessarily the simplest

and earliest form in which the gospel is administered; but it does not follow that it should continue; the presumption drawn from all analogies lies the other way. The first controlling power in temporal government is the paternal relation, constituting the family compact; but unless there be a super-added control over fathers and families, no nation can be governed. Mr. Wesley was sole pastor of the Methodists for a while; but in proportion to his success was the necessity of a continually extending jurisdiction consisting of joint pastors. The presbyterian regimen is a form more advanced than the first simple one just adverted to, and is a systematic mode of preserving ministerial purity and doctrinal truth, and of providing for enlargement and enterprise, and of making the mutual dependance of individual churches on each other co-exist with a general independency in respect to the world. Episcopacy, when pure and spiritual, is the most fully established and comprehensive form of Christianity; and makes provision for the perpetuation of the truth, the uniformity of ordinances, and the oversight at once of the flock, and of the pastors.

I speak of scriptural episcopacy, which has nothing to do with the question of national establishments, or any form of them that may be in existence. Truth is the offspring and servant of Christ, while the pastorate is the offspring and servant of truth, though not less the servant of Christ at the same time. Every thing in its own order. Christ instituted the pastoral office and relation, the truth calls it into form and order, while Providence, taking as an offering its gracious evangelical fruits, stamps sanction thereon, and frowns upon the schismatic disturber.

How is it, however, that good men, with the same Bible before them, should become exclusionists in reference to their different systems of church polity? The reason is obvious. The Bible, in the majority of instances, is not the sole authority to which they appeal, or if they appeal to it, it is not so much their teacher in this case as their defender. Every one finds himself from infancy included by the providence of God, in some Christian congregation, or Christian circle, where certain views of doctrine and discipline are cherished and familiar, and where, in the usual way, no other views are stated; and therefore, when in controversy with others, his favourite views of polity and regimen are questioned, he appeals to those passages of the Bible which favour him, not receiving his views from the Bible as a whole, but flying to it for justification and defence. The Churchman finds episcopacy in the angels of the Asian churches; the Methodists and Church of Scotland find a presbytery in the Ephesian college of elders at the time of Paul's departure; and the Congregationalist, an isolated church and pastor in St. James and his flock at Jerusalem. If these turn exclusionists, and oppose each other, then so far as Scripture is concerned, they are like the fabled knights who quarrelled and fought to settle a dispute respecting a double shield, one calling it silver, the other brass, both being right, and both wrong. Church polity, being in Scripture what the truth at the time spoken of has made it to be, the only positive institute in the case is, that there shall be a pastoral office, on the ground that the truth necessarily requires and entails it. The Holy Ghost raises up from time to time the men who are to be appointed

to discharge its obligations ; and it is a part of the same pastoral office to commit evangelical doctrine to faithful and able men thus raised, with a standing injunction that they ordain no other than similar successors, and with a warning that the ordination of other than similar persons in heaven is void. The waters of Jerusalem, the city of God, in coming forth upon the world, were meant to form their own channel, according to the face of the region through which they had to pass.

To contend exclusively for ministers ordained by a succession of bishops, in a line which has no chasm, is not to deduce a doctrine from the spirit and letter of the gospel, but to construct a theory which shall have the effect of defending bad men ; and it may be more than questioned, whether, if all the clergy of the Church of England, during the three past centuries had been spiritually minded and devout men, surrounded by the fruits of their ministry, we should have heard a word about the claim of apostolical succession.

This is then our first position,—the word of God establishes and sanctions a pastoral office, but does not positively determine its form. Truth is greater than its medium of conveyance, preservation, and administration, even as God is greater than the temple in which He dwells ; and even if there had been a positive institute establishing a lineal succession ever so arbitrary, the analogies of past time shew that the order might be interrupted, that the purposes of love and mercy to the world might not be frustrated by the unfaithfulness of men.

I am, Dear Sir, yours,

LETTER II.

The Ministerial Succession.

MY DEAR SIR,

I stated in my last letter that forms of church order, which were well adapted to promote the ends of the gospel, have always been stamped with the authorizing sanction of God's providence. To this point I wish now to direct special attention. It must appear evident that where there is not an express law of Scripture in reference to the form of the Christian ministry, the long sanction of Divine Providence amounts to a law, which is binding upon men in general, until circumstances shall arrive when it is contravened by a higher law. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, recommended the institution of elders, who should counsel and govern the several divisions of the people; and thus, without any written law or formal commission, given either to Jethro or Moses, an order of men arose who were sanctioned in their official capacity by subsequent divine enactments, and throughout the long after-course of God's providence. The elders, indeed, after the return from captivity, and the disappearance of the prophets, became the principal instructors of the people, and the conductors of the synagogue worship, as is

abundantly evident from the practice in our Lord's time. Yet our Lord himself submitted to the order of synagogue worship, inasmuch as it had the providential sanction of four centuries. He neither rebuked the elders as usurpers and intruders, nor asked them by what authority they did those things. The same may be said of episcopacy in the church of God. The ministers of Christ, for the sake of promulgating, and at the same time of establishing the truth, fell into this form. It was adapted to the monarchical governments of the various nations into which the gospel was carried; so that the divisions of evangelized kingdoms and empires, became by consequence the divisions of the church, each having its bishop, archbishop, or patriarch, as the case might be, and accordingly as the allotted field of culture was a town, a district, a province, or a kingdom. The pastoral office continued in the episcopal form from age to age, it preserved in this state the truth by which a sinner is saved, although in the course of time, by superstition and corruption, that truth was practically set aside and overborne. It is from the episcopal ministry that the holiest and most zealous servants of Christ have appeared:—Ignatius, Polycarp, Cyprian, Augustine, Bradwardine, Bernard, Luther, Hooker, Jewell, Pascal, Fenelon, Hall, Baxter, Howe, Wesley, Whitfield, Fletcher. Every revival of true religion has taken its rise from them, and the re-form of corrupted churches has been conducted by them as the instruments. This is the sanction of Divine Providence, although the ordination of very many in the line cannot possibly be anything more than an

“ordinance of man,” on account of their unregenerate and unholy character. When wicked men administered the ordinances, it might be that those of their congregations who were sincere worshipers received the benefit; but the administrators were a complete blank in the case. God was then his own minister. When we discourse respecting the ministerial succession, we are not so far to indulge in the imagination of a chain, as to make it necessary that the servants of Christ should touch each other, or be locked into each other as links. Enough that the individual has the vocation of the body. High episcopalian writers, even, in those gracious moments in which a warm heart has vented forth its love of true Christianity, viewed as abstract from the form in which it has been administered, have virtually coincided with this view; and amongst them Bishop Jeremy Taylor, whose testimony is of more value, as his theology was that of Archbishop Laud, and who might be considered in early life at least, a protégé of that prelate. “Can he minister the Spirit, from whom the Spirit of God has departed? and therefore, since all wickedness does ‘grieve the Spirit of God,’ and great wickedness defiles his temples, and destroys them unto the ground, and extinguishes the Spirit that drives iniquity away; those persons are no longer spiritual men; they are ‘carnal, sold under sin,’ and walk not in the Spirit; they are spiritual, just as Simon Magus was a Christian, or as Judas was an apostle, he had the name of it, but what says the Scripture? ‘He fell from it by transgression.’” * * * And this is excellently discoursed of by St. Austin: “*Sacramentum gratiæ dat etiam Deus per malos ipsam vero gratiam non nisi per seipsum ve-*

per sanctos suos." God gives the sacraments of his grace by evil ministers, yet not the grace itself, except by himself or by his sanctified ones; and therefore (proceeds Bishop Taylor, by way of paraphrase and according to his own divinity) he gives remission of sins by himself or by the members of the dove, so that good men shall be supplied by God." The ministry of a wicked man cannot be more nullified than it is in this passage. To the wicked, he saith "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes." Psalm l. 16. Genealogies, constitutions, canons, and traditions, as far as they affect this point all becomes useless; *nantes in gurgite vasto*, viewed as connected with time, and eventually to be forgotten in eternity. And if instead of fragments floating on the flood, a more delicate taste regards them as the necessary product of the pastures of the church, then, to use the words of a sacred poet,

"Perish the grass and fade the flower,
If firm the word of God remains."

To keep, however, to our point, very many episcopal ordinations have doubtless been mere ordinances of man, and effected without the authority of the Holy Ghost; yet in those instances in which not any other and purer pastorate has been raised up, it is equally doubtless that those words of the apostle have applied, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," 1 Peter, ii. 13; the obligation to obedience resting upon the same ground as obedience to civil governors.

The parable of the wheat and tares has reference to the whole church, and admonishes not only the laity, but the ministry.

And yet it was not consistent with the Divine holiness, and with the true nature of the religion of Christ, that a system which had in course of time failed to accomplish his purposes, and which had raised ministers who to Him were no ministers, should not be interfered with. If that religion practically exemplified, consists in a sanctified character and heavenly dispositions, how could the righteous Head of the church permit its doctrines and ordinances to be continuously administered by those who were of an opposite character? The Church of Rome was corrupt and dead, and therefore Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin were raised up, who, in their turn, raised other churches; the ministers of which did not come from the episcopal line.

We have seen before that in times of degeneracy God has interfered with established order, and this was repeated at the Reformation. At the rise of Methodism too there was an extensive and decided interference. It is matter of painful history, which no one now thinks of denying, that the established Church in this country about the beginning of the eighteenth century, had sunk into the utmost worldliness and apathy.

Most of the clergy were spiritually ignorant and immoral, and the country was overflowed with wickedness. Mr. Wesley, as you are aware by his very ordination, was sent to "seek for Christ's sheep that be scattered abroad," for this is the very phrase employed in the exhortation which is used in the ordination service; and being peculiarly prompted to obey this injunction by the overflowing love to Christ, which he felt in consequence of his having found the great salvation, his success led to the unavoidable assembling of great congregations,

the consequent opening of unepiscopal chapels, and the equally unavoidable appointment of other ministers ; for while the Church had with scriptural propriety enjoined on him the labour—the going abroad to seek Christ's sheep, which had produced these results, she refused to sanction them when realized.

Mr. Wesley's first assistants professed to experience that inward moving of the Holy Ghost which the Church of England requires her candidates to profess, and which, by the way, is assuredly a point of experimental religion, howsoever, at the present day, such a religion is decried ; and that they were not mistaken, is proved by the sacred and scriptural fruits of their ministry. Ungodly men of every class, under their powerful ministrations which were ever accompanied by the unction of the Holy One, were converted from sin to holiness, and were framed into a fellowship of happy and united believers. They lived in the righteous discharge of every relative duty, and died triumphantly in the faith of the gospel. This was the hand of God interfering with the order of episcopal ordination and breaking settled usages as he had done before. The moral miracles in the case,—the bringing a clean thing out of an unclean, proved the divine interposition in the same way as it was proved in the acts and appeals of the apostles. The records and biographies of Methodism invite scrutiny as to the fact that the worst of men were changed into meek, lamb-like, and heavenly characters,—men who either had heard and attended the church service in vain, or who had been practically heathen, and who had never awakened the least spark of clerical sympathy. And these last were immensely in the majority.

The apostles in carrying the gospel to the heathen, appealed to the visible signs and miracles which they wrought, for the general authentication of their mission; but when they asserted their ministerial character as servants of the Lord Jesus, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and confronted schismatic opposition, they then appealed, as the Methodist preachers subsequently did, to their fruits; not that they vested their authority in their fruits but referred to them retrospectively as a divine seal. Paul, for instance, to the 1 Corinthians ix. 2: "The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." And again, 2 Cor. iii. 2, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

Bishop Taylor, in his work on the Office Ministerial, observes, that "whosoever pretends to a license of preaching by reason of an extraordinary calling, must look that he be furnished with an extraordinary message, lest his commission be ridiculous; and when he comes, he must be sure to shew his authority by an argument proportionable; that is, by such a probation, without which no wise man can reasonably believe him, which cannot be less than miraculous and divine. In all other cases he comes under the curse of *non missi*, those whom God sent not." Never since the days of the apostles was this condition more fulfilled than in the case of the first Methodists, for nothing was more extraordinary in their time than the faithful preaching of the doctrines of the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England, and no moral miracles were more impressive than the transformation of the savage and wicked colliers of Kingswood into believers in Jesus, and doers of righteousness; just as in modern times, the same continued

agency, has effected a similar transformation in the case of the brutal and cannibal New Zealanders.

Mr. Wesley was actuated by the paramount love of Christ which obliged him to save souls from death at any cost, and this he felt to be a law which controlled and governed those laws of the Church which had been previously sanctioned by providence. When men so act as to exhibit the undivided fruit of the spirit spoken of in Gal. v. 22, the Apostle says that *against* them there is no law.

And if the arms of the Church were not opened so wide as those of Christ, then the Church herself stood convicted of sin in her exclusiveness ; for however in theory she commissioned her ministers to save sinners any where, she frowned upon it in practice. Mr. Wesley, in order to cherish and preserve the fruit thus gathered, found it necessary to provide a succession of Methodist ministers and ordinances, inasmuch as the establishment neither received the flock nor their pastors to *her* ordinances, but repelled both.*

The gospel being promulgated by the authority of Christ, and in profession by the Church herself, her ministers, however, slumbering by, all the while unconcerned, the rise of an extraordinary ministry was inevitable. The Methodist system arose sanctioned by principles already conceded by eminent episcopalians. Hooker, as we have seen, acknowledges an "exigence of necessity," under which "the usual wayes of the

* Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, vol. 1, pp. 221, 233. Moore's Life of John, vol. 1, p. 518. Whitehead's Life, vol. 1, pp. 262, 271, 372, 308. Wesley's Journal, vol. 1, pp. 408, 409.

Church" may be departed from, and what necessity can be greater than that which arises, when thousands of spiritually destitute souls are unprovided for, and a bishop cannot be found to ordain those whom the Holy Ghost evidently raises up as their appropriate pastors and guides. This is the very case he contemplates.

Bishop Hall, as is shewn in the last letter, excused the foreign churches for departing from episcopacy on the ground that "they were troubled to part with it;" that they would have retained it if they could, and could they have had the reformed religion too, and that, "by the iniquity of the times, they were driven out of it." Let all this be applied to Methodism. The struggles of mind in the two Wesleys between their ecclesiastical attachments and the yearnings of their zeal, prove how loath they were to part with episcopacy; and could they have obtained it, and (I will not say the reformed religion, but) the religion of their own Articles and Homilies, Methodism would never have been heard of, otherwise than as a spiritual society or college within the Church. And not only did the Methodists *imagine* that they were driven out of the usual order, but they were actually so, through the persecution, by clergymen of their flocks at home, and the refusal of regular bishops for those who were abroad. They preserved their own idea of episcopacy indeed, in the bishops which they appointed, imitating so far the example of the ancient church of Alexandria; but they were literally, and not imaginarily, driven out of the diocesan and established pale. Bishop Burnet says, that "Christians, if they find the usual worship so defiled that they cannot, with a good conscience, join in it, and if they know of no other place

in which they can worship God purely," may, in such a case, submit themselves to one who is ordained to the lower functions; and if he cannot be had, even to one of their own number, and that the foundation so laid may grow up into a regular constitution; and that all this is consistent with the spirit of the Article of the Church which treats of ministering in the congregation. This passage seems really prophetic. Bishop Burnet deeply mourned over the low and worldly state of the Church in his day, as any one may see, by reference to his book on Pastoral Care. The Methodists accordingly, in a majority of instances, found the Church worship practically so defiled, whatever might be the truth and impressiveness of the Liturgy, that they could not attend it without being subjected to the most coarse and senseless attacks upon them, their teachers, and that vital religion which they held dearer than life; so that the course marked out by Bishop Burnet was the only one they could follow. The same church which put Baxter and Howe, and their colleagues out, refused to take the Methodists in, and thus allowed vital godliness to perish by depletion, and in consequence has since suffered, and is still suffering its retributive trials.

But in the way just pointed out, the Methodist church and ministry arose. Our conclusion is again presented to us. The truth, immediately, in the order of causes, created the office. Had it not been the truth, it had not produced the fruits of holiness, the love of God and love of man. Christ as the Head of the Church, and as exercising the supreme authority, interfered with episcopal ordination, and turned ministerial gifts and authority into a collateral channel—a channel now as divinely

owned as the main stream—the Methodist Conference being scripturally empowered to ordain its own pastors, and they to appoint their own lay-helpers or local preachers. That Methodism itself has cherished in part the spirit of exclusiveness, is probable enough, and the circumstance cannot be wondered at when we remember that from the very first it has had to stand upon the defensive, and has only lived by the sufferance of men and the favour of God. Whether in consequence of possible alterations in the English episcopal church, it shall ever be formally united to that communion, or whether it shall for ever retain its separate position,—a position at present unavoidable and most appropriate, is known only to Him from whom no secrets are hid. It is not ours to speculate about the future but to act upon principles of holiness and truth in reference to the present.

And yet, my dear sir, I know that here I shall be asked how this view can be made to agree with the acknowledged necessary union of the Church Catholic? The question, however, can only be seriously proposed by those who assume that the visible unity of the Church consists in uniformity of government. The true visible unity of the Church is stated by St. Paul in Ephes. iv. 4, 5, 6, “There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all.” As the importance of the subject will justify it, let each particular be examined.

1st. There is *one body* and *one Spirit*. The figure of the apostle in this chapter is,—the human body animated

by the soul within, and the doctrine consequently is, that the unity and identity of the Church depend upon the internal Spirit, just as the unity and identity of the human individual depend upon his soul. Wherever, therefore, the Spirit in his sanctifying and uniting operation is found among men, we are there bound to infer the living body, and not where the professed body is to infer the Spirit,—that is the grand popish error, as faulty in nature and logic as it is in divinity; for the body may be dead, but the Spirit cannot die, and the living church must be tested by the presence of its immortal principle, “the Lord and giver of life,” and his presence is tested by his undivided fruit. The Apostle, in consequence, adds, “even as ye are called in one hope of your calling,” that is, called to be saints, Rom. i. 7; called to holiness, which could not be realized without his actual presence. Every individual church, therefore, realizes the idea of the Apostle, when its collected members, form, by their christian union, one body, and the Catholic Church throughout the world would realize it, if the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregational communities which held the truth and practical holiness, were labouring together in unity and love. The universality of the Spirit would prove the identity and unity of the body. Individual churches, such as the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Church of Scotland, would be individual members of the body, each preserving its peculiar character; the figure of the Apostle would then be preserved in all its consistency, there would be the intelligent head, the far seeing eye, the busy hand, and the laborious foot, and yet there would be but one body.

2nd. *One Lord*. A title, implying not only dominion, but divinity.* From the body of Christ must therefore, by this text, be excluded all who deny the true and proper Deity of Christ; an exclusion, in which no evangelical churches are concerned, but only those who have fallen into the deadly Arian and Socinian errors.

3rd. *One Faith*. Not by the term faith implying an exact uniformity of religious opinion upon all points, for neither could Romanism nor Anglicanism bear their unity to be put to this test; but one faith, as it signifies one trust in a divine and atoning Redeemer; the faith

* As when we read "thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most High in all the earth," Psalm lxxxiii. 18; and when God so expresseth himself—"I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them." Exodus vi. 3. In both these places for the name Jehovah the Greek translation which the apostles followed hath no other name but Lord; and therefore undoubtedly by that word which we translate the Lord, did they understand the proper name of God—Jehovah. And had they placed it there as the exposition of any other name of God, they had made an interpretation contrary to the manifest intention of the Spirit; for it cannot be denied that God was known to Abraham by the true importance of the title Adonai, as much as by the name of Shaddai; as much by his dominion and sovereignty as by his power and all-sufficiency: but by any experimental and personal sense of the fulfilling of his promises, his name was not known to him; for though God spake expressly unto Abraham, "All the land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever", Gen. xiii. 15, xxvi. 3; yet the history teacheth us, and St. Stephen confirmeth us that "he gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set set his foot on, though he promised that he would give it to him for a possession." Acts vii. 5. Wherefore when God saith he was not known to Abraham by his name Jehovah, the interpretation of no other name can make good that expression: and therefore, we have reason to believe the word which the first Greek translators and the apostles after them used, may be appropriated to that notion which the original requires: as indeed it may be, being derived from a root of the same signification with the Hebrew root, and so denoting the essence or existence of God, and whatsoever else may be deduced from thence, as revealed by him, to be signified thereby.—*Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Article 2, p. 224.*

in which the elders died (Heb. xi. 13); the trust mentioned in Eph. i. 12, resulting in holiness of heart and life. This sense of faith necessarily connects with it the cognate doctrines of original and actual depravity, of the Manhood and Godhead of Christ, and of the offices and personality of the Divine Sanctifier; and this in the New Testament is the most frequent sense of the term.

4th. *One Baptism.* Not one baptism as to the mode or time of its observance, or as to the subjects to whom it is administered; but one baptism in the ever-blessed names of the Three-in-One, a covenant transaction, a sign of regeneration, and a seal whereby to pledge unto us all the blessings of the gospel, according to our own faithfulness to the terms imposed on us. A baptism this which includes all evangelical modes of the sacrament.

5th. *One God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. In the church, the body of Christ, glory is given to the Father as the fountain of Deity, and the first in order of the Three; the concluding words, "who is above all, and through all, and in you all," are in meaning very deep. No man hath seen God (the Father) at any time, and if therefore he be revealed to believers as the Father, and their Father, and so as to be in them, it must be by the Spirit of adoption. This implies religious experience, and the witness of the Spirit. No other sense can possibly be conceived in which the Father is ever, through, and in us all. This is analagous to, but infinitely beyond, the influence of a father's character, authority, and love in a human family. In the Apostle's account of church unity, therefore, there is nothing to prevent those evangelic communities being included, which hold the great

catholic truths therein specified; individual churches, with their several bodies of pastors, being nothing more or less than the head, the hand, the foot, or the eye, which compose the united body. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6.

It will be asked again in the second place, how it will be possible with these views to prevent fanatical or other intruders, from claiming a place in the ministry, and especially how it will be possible to prevent the rise of sects, and convict church disturbers of schism? It is cheerfully and devoutly granted, in answer, that there is such a sin as schism, even when that word is intended to mean a causeless separation from an existing church; and that there is such a thing, too, as a conceited or an ignorant person, or a fanatic aiming to intrude into the ministry, and especially at times, when in many places, the preachers of political sedition and infidelity outnumber the ministers of the gospel; and when, from the diffusion of the principles of those men, many would reduce the pastorate and all other offices to the same level; it will therefore follow, that, to avoid these evils in the ordinary course of the gospel, an outward vocation is necessary. It is to be assumed, undoubtedly, that there are some in the congregation who have power and authority to call others to labour in the Lord's vineyard, that is to say, such as are inwardly moved thereto by the Holy Ghost, or else the Church is not provided for. We have already asserted and shewn, that an institution which has been sanctioned

by God's providence, and has had many marks of his favour, and has had included in it numbers of holy and devoted men, even if it cannot prove a *jus divinum*, is nevertheless to be regarded as his standing ordinance, until it can be shewn by an appeal to the Scripture that it has failed to answer his purpose, and that at the same time his providence is providing a substitute. Such was the eldership among the Jews instituted by Jethro, and such likewise the episcopal form of pastorship in the churches of Christ,—not the pastorship itself, for that is constituted by the authority of Christ and his apostles. The application of all this is; no man without guilt can separate from that church in which he was spiritually born and cherished, so as to form the nucleus of another community, unless he can prove that his church has fallen in doctrine, or practice, or both; though he may enter one already existing, which he may deem a purer. It was in such a case that Luther and Calvin separated. To separate under any other circumstances, is to separate, not for loss of pure doctrine, or edifying ordinances, or want of salutary discipline, but for personal pique, or private quarrels, or disappointed ambition, or worldly political principles. To depart thus, is to promote strife, exasperated feelings, and the destruction of Christian charity. A community so raised, whatever few individual cases of piety and simplicity it may contain, is unauthorized and unprospered by God. This is the sectarianism which implies the sin of schism, so frequently referred to in the epistles of the New Testament. The facts of ecclesiastical history bear out these principles. Those dissenters who left the church of England simply because it left them not at liberty to choose their

own doctrines, and became Presbyterian, first fell into Arianism, then Socinianism, then melted away. When the Methodists separated, it was because the doctrine of the Church was no longer preached, and its discipline was not exercised, and when its ordinances, particularly the sacrament of the Lord's supper, to them at least, were not administered. There was no breach of love, no exasperation nor proselyting, nor schism. The Church's doctrine, and discipline, and ministry, had fallen ; Church documents, as well as the scripture being witness ; and therefore, by degrees, not being able to act upon the evangelical principles which the Church enjoined within the pale, they established the whole within themselves. Their presbyters were raised and appointed by church presbyters, and this new ministry was so blessed of God as to be elevated into a prosperous church. The same may be said of the best and most evangelical dissenting churches, raised by the ministry of Whitfield.

And now Methodism and its ministry, and those other ministers have, in their turn, the same sanction of providence, which has for so many centuries sanctioned the episcopacy, and to this, there has been added the higher sanction of the spirit's converting and hallowing influence. Whatever separations have been made from the Methodist connexion for schismatic causes, that is to say, causes in which doctrine, discipline, and religious privileges have had no concern ; the ministry so raised has been comparatively unblessed, and the community has either perished away or lingered on, without that evidence of the divine favour which is found in multiplied conversions, conjointly with vital holiness, enlight-

ened zeal and brotherly love. And most of the schismatic separatists from dissenting churches have perished in like manner, or are at least perishing. Such is the sanction of God's providence. The existing ministry, the bishops and elders who hold the truth as specified by the Apostle, are the ordaining authority for the present and every present generation, and no man may leave the communion of his respective church to form another communion, without either having their authority, or proving from their own records that they have fallen from the teaching and practice of the gospel of Christ, and that all attempts to reform and revive them have failed. Let a church answer to the Apostle's description, let it shew "One body and one Spirit," the Spirit by his fruit determining the identity of the body, let it acknowledge one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in them all;" and this is undoubtedly a church of Christ, and a part of the holy church throughout all the world; and he who separates from it, to form a sect, without shewing that it has lost either the doctrine, or discipline here implied, is a divider of the Church, a schismatic, and as such, accountable to Christ the spiritual head.

The Christian ministry is then called into existence by that Spirit who is the Spirit of truth. The succession runs on among those who hold the truth, and those only. The outward institution has been suffered to stand no longer than it has held the truth;—though that truth has often been for long borne down in its practical application, by a cumbrous load of superstition and impure morality. On the occasion of its thus failing to answer

the divine purposes, and when the truth itself has become corrupted, its orders have been interfered with, and a newly commissioned race of teachers has arisen, which becomes in the sphere assigned to it, the ordaining authority, at least as long as the title of "faithful" belongs unto it, and it is able to teach others also; and whoever shall depart from its communion, or from any similar, except for the cause of its spiritual fall, they depart to be destroyed as a communion by their own unholy tempers, and the judicial anger of God. His providence is a comment upon his written word.

Tell us not then of a succession, which, like that which passed before the face of Samuel, consists of an Eliab, Shammah, and Abinadib, and their seven brethren, for the "Lord seeth not as man seeth." None of these hath he chosen. The election falls upon David, the man after God's own heart.

The true type of the Christian ministerial line is to be found in that college of apostles which first began to extend it, and from which Judas, by transgression, fell, and was separated, and from which, all wicked bishops and patriarchs, (if, for the sake of argument, they are to be called apostles) themselves moral traitors, have likewise fallen; and unto which, on the other hand, Paul, an extraordinary messenger without any church vocation is superadded. This is a line of regenerate, holy, personal witnesses of the power of true godliness, who are likewise keepers of that faith which was "once delivered to the saints."—Once, while the canon of Scripture was completed, and not by added communications in primitive antiquity; and for this faith it has been their duty to contend.

Tell us not of a unity, which, like that of papacy, is produced by the creation of a mighty authority, the creation of a sole seat in the temple of God, which towers above the mercy seat,—the shrine of His word, and which levels, by a "*brutum fulmen*," all the faith, and love, and zeal and pity for the souls of men, which may be struggling to rise above the word's standard. Let the sacred temple of which we speak, be regarded as that of the whole world, and the unity in question is the unity of a desert swept by a simoom, where nothing can exist but death. But if we learn from its antitype above, the temple of God on earth has no thrones of judgment, save those which belong to the twelve apostles of the Lamb, Matthew xix. 28. Where their authority is obeyed without its being perverted, (and as they are themselves human, they need no human comments) their Lord is enthroned and adored as the Supreme, and the unity in this case is that which is produced by the effusion of both his regal and priestly unction upon His members, that is to say, upon all, from the lowliest and weakest to the highest and most honourable ; making them, by its hallowed gifts and graces—the treasures of the Holy One, "a chosen generation," "a royal priesthood," "a peculiar people;" all different, but all sanctified, bound by the grace which was pleaded for in Christ's last earthly intercession, all to each other, and all to God. Thus did the inspired psalmist represent our unity, psalm 133, and thus in the light of Christian vision do we mourn its absence, and plead for its approach.

Yours, Dear Sir,

As ever.

LETTER III.

Christian Sacraments.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN adverting in the next place to the sacraments of christianity, I feel myself placed in Horace's difficulty, *Brevis esse laboro et obscurus fio*, yet I am desirous, nevertheless, that my demands upon your time and attention should be as moderate as possible. The term sacrament is applied by protestants to the covenant ordinances of christianity, called by the church of Scotland the sealing ordinances, and was first introduced into ecclesiastical usage by the Vulgate, in which the word *sacramentum* stood as the translation of *μυστήριον* mystery. Sacramentum in its strict and primary sense, signified a military oath by which members of the army were sworn to fidelity, and perhaps it was on this account partly, that the early christians regarding the Church in this world as being always in a militant state, applied it to those sacred rites in which every professing christian solemnly promises to be faithful to his Lord, to "fight the good fight of faith," and to "lay hold on eternal life." Although we do not find the word in scripture, yet we may use it as a collocation of scripture ideas ; just as we use the word Trinity, which is likewise not in the scrip-

ture, to express the *modus existendi* of the Godhead. The word ordinance would not be sufficient, for it would not distinguish between those federal rites which Christ himself instituted, and the other more general means of grace. Because baptism and the Lord's supper alone answer this last description, the vanity and presumption of Rome in appending five other ordinances to the sacramental dignity and solemnity is sufficiently apparent. The Romanist doctrine of the sacraments, as you are well aware, is, that they contain the grace which they signify, and confer it, *ipso facto*, upon all such recipients as do not present any obstruction by mortal sin, and that nothing more is necessary to this effect than that the priests who make and consecrate the sacraments, have an intention of doing what the church does, and intends to do.* This view being grounded on no scripture but tradition—that is to say, on the assertion of any ecclesiastical writer, or inventor of superstitions which that church may produce—and being pointedly opposed to God's method declared in the Scripture, of justifying the ungodly and sanctifying believers,—that is to say, through faith—of which faith the Council of Trent says the efficacy of the sacrament is independent,† thus making the rite itself a mere charm;—this view, I say, must be abandoned at once, as a daring and impious corruption of the positive institutions of Christianity.

It is equally true, however, that some of the reformers, especially Zuinglius, who is still followed by many, in the revulsion of opinions at the Reformation, went to

* 1 Con. Trid. Can. 11.

† 2 Con. Trid. sess. 7, 8.

the opposite extreme. This opposite opinion is that “the sacraments do not differ essentially from other rites and ceremonies of religion, but that their peculiarity consists in their emblematic character, under which they represent what is spiritual and invisible, and are memorials of past events.”*

That this is a defective view of the Christian sacraments the devout student of Scripture will perceive, though it must be confessed that when compared with the Romanist view, it has the advantage of elevating the sacramental ritual into a “reasonable service.”

But you know the soundest reformers, and the best and most learned men of all ages, have concurred in regarding sacraments as covenant transactions,—illustrations by action, and confirmations, of a compact entered into by God with His redeemed creatures. If circumcision was “a sign” and “seal,” as stated in Rom. iv. 11, of the covenant by which God mercifully engaged to justify men through faith, then, as St. Paul declares Baptism to be “the circumcision of Christ,” Col. ii. 10—12, or Christian circumcision as the whole scope and context compels us to understand the phrase, this baptism must have the same office and significance as circumcision, whatever added significance it may have beside.† The passage from Gal. iii. 27—29, may be

* Watson's Institutes, vol. 3, p. 386.

† Unless *συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ Βαπτίσματι* be exegetical of *ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ* the apostle would represent us as putting “off the body of the sins of the flesh” by virtue of our Lord's personal circumcision, which is absurd and palpably opposed to all scripture, and all forms of

adduced to the same effect : “ For as many of you as have been baptized *into* Christ, have put on Christ ; there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus ; and if ye are Christ’s, (by thus being ‘baptized’ and by ‘putting on’ Christ,) then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” In no way, but by circumcision, could Jews and strangers in old time, become parties to God’s covenant, after the time of Abraham, the representative of all evangelical believers ; but here the apostle asserts that this state of blessedness, this covenant relation to God in all its final perfection, is to be obtained through “baptism” and the “putting on of Christ,” clearly showing that what circumcision was before, baptism is now. And with regard to the other sacrament, if the passover was a sign, pledge, or seal, Exod. xiii. 9, and subsequently a memorial, Exod. xii. 14, then these characters will belong to the Lord’s supper, the relation of which to the new covenant in His blood, is stated by himself, in words which further imply its retrospective relation to the passover.

Moreover, St. Paul, His apostle, speaks out distinctly, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. “ Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” The

Christianity. Circumcisionem hîc intelligit, non passivum, quâ Christus in infantia circumciscus fuit ; sed activam illam, quâ ipse nos circumcidere solet : de qua, vide Rom. ii. 28, 29, quâ Christus Spiritu suo nos intus circumcidit. — Beza in Poli Synopsis ad loc.

Oxford theologians,* following some of the Fathers, deny the sacramental character of circumcision altogether, which is actually and virtually going farther than to adopt the Romanist distinction between the covenant rites of the Old Testament and those of the New, the distinction of *ex opere operantis*, and *ex opere operato*. They are evidently driven to this, by perceiving that Abraham was justified by faith while he was in an uncircumcised state, which would be utterly inconsistent with *their view* of a sacrament; and thus by them this ancient ordinance of the covenant of grace (which covenant was substantially the same in all ages, though different in manifestation) was regarded as a figure or type of baptism,—the sign of a sign! Inspiration, however, has made it the *sign* and *seal* of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11,—a decision not to be set aside by the dictum of Justin or Augustin;—and therefore circumcision occupies the same position in the Jewish Church which baptism does in the Christian; though this does not preclude the devout belief that as the present dispensation is eminently that of the Spirit, the Christian ordinance is more frequently the channel of blessing, and blessing of a richer character. Bishop Jewell does not hesitate to say, “Thus God ordained the sacrament of circumcision. This sacrament was a seal of God’s promise to Abraham, and a seal of Abraham’s faith and obedience towards God. By this sacrament was man bound to the Lord; and by the same sacrament God vouchsafed to bind himself to man;” and

* “Tracts for the Times,” 67.—Circumcision.

again, "Circumcision was not a bare sign. That is not circumcision which is outward in the flesh, saith St. Paul, but the circumcision of the heart. * * * * In Christ ye are circumcised in the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the sinful body of the flesh through the circumcision of Christ," *i. e.* Christian circumcision.* As far, then, as a sacrament contains a *signum significans*, it is emblematic. Baptism contains in its water the visible representation of the poured out and cleansing influence of the Holy Ghost, and the Eucharist, in its elements, that of the body and blood of Christ; His body, sacramentally exhibited, signifying life; His blood, atonement. But as far as a sacrament contains a *signum confirmans*, it is a divine pledge or security that God will give unto the participant all the grace of the covenant to which it refers, according to his obedience to its terms; and it may be, though always it is not the channel through which it is conveyed, inasmuch as a baptized Simon was declared by the Apostle Paul himself, and immediately after the ordinance, to be "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." If there was anything sacramental in the ancient ceremony of unction, this will not help the Romanizing argument, for even then we shall see that Saul was anointed first, and God gave him a new heart afterwards. 1 Sam. x. 9.

Sacraments, however, assume a varied aspect because of their mixed nature, and according to the position in which they are placed before us; and it is through for-

* Jewell, on Sacraments, 262. Works—London, 1611.

getfulness or oversight of this, that so many disputes have arisen concerning them. Hooker, to whose sanctified and master intellect we have both delighted to do homage, has well stated this view in the following words,—“Let respect be had to the duty which every communicant doth undertake, and we may well determine concerning the use of sacraments, that they serve as bonds of obedience to God, strict obligations to the exercise of mutual charity, provocations to godliness, preservations from sin, memorials of the principal benefits of Christ; respect the time of their institution, and it thereby appeareth that God hath annexed them for ever unto the New Testament as other rites were before with the Old; regard the weakness which is in us, and they are warrants for the more security of our belief; compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not, and sacraments are marks of distinction to separate God’s own from strangers; so that in all these respects they are found to be most necessary. But their chiefest force and virtue consisteth not herein so much as in that they are heavenly ceremonies which God hath sanctified and ordained to be administered in His church. First, as marks whereby to know when God doth impart the vital or saving grace of Christ unto all that are capable thereof; and secondly, as means conditional which God requireth in them to whom he imparteth grace. For since God in himself is invisible and cannot by us be discerned working, therefore, when it seemeth good in the eyes of His heavenly wisdom that men for some special intent and purpose, should take notice of His glorious presence, He giveth them some plain and sensible token whereby to know what they cannot see.” After illus-

trating this point by the case of Moses, who, although he could not see God and live, yet knew by the visible fire where the divine glory was extraordinarily present, and by the presence of the invisible angel at Bethesda, as manifest by the troubled waters, and by the descent of the Spirit upon the apostles as indicated by means of fiery tongues; and after shewing that sacraments are *moral* and not physical instruments, (as transubstantiation and the Anglican doctrine would make them) he thus sums up his total estimate of them. "For we take not Baptism nor the Eucharist for bare resemblances or memorials of things absent, neither for naked signs or testimonies assuring us of grace received before, but (as they are in deed and in verity) for means effectual, whereby God, when we take the sacraments, delivereth into our hands the grace available unto eternal life, which grace the sacraments represent or signify."* To this effect is likewise the twenty-fifth Article of the Church of England which concludes thus, "In such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation, but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation as St. Paul saith." Our view, therefore, is confirmed, that a sacrament, setting aside its other meanings as a badge of Christianity and token of professed obedience to Christ, is a covenant action, implying on the part of God an engagement to give that grace of which it presents a visible emblem, the measure of which is in accordance to the obedience of the recipient to new covenant conditions, and through the

* Eccles. Poly. B. 5, s. 57.

sacrament as a channel He may, but does not invariably, impart it: and on the part of the recipient himself, it implies his professed acceptance of the gospel, though not necessarily and at once his hearty and penitent affiance in that Saviour which the gospel reveals.

A patient examination of the word of God, therefore, rescues these great Christian rites in the first place from the grossness of Romanism, and not only so, but from the superstitious views of a great part of the early Church, whose falling away from the truth, predicted by St. Paul, II Thes. ii. 3, prepared the way for the revelation of the man of sin; and in the second place, from the deadly coldness of socinian error, which makes them nothing more than emblematic memorials, having no higher influence and efficacy than to call to mind the sanctifying Spirit and the atoning blood; just as the sight of an anchor calls forth the idea of hope, and that of the dove the idea of innocence.

The administration of sacraments rests with the pastoral office. The apostles it was who received the commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, (Mark xvi. 15, 16,) or as it is expressed in another place, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,) to make disciples of them μαθητεύσατε; attending at the same time to the other commanded adjuncts of the evangelical ministry, baptizing βαπτίζοντες, and teaching διδασκοντες; and therefore, all the ministers of Christ, who, by the call of His Holy Spirit, and the appointment of the visible church, succeed to the apostolic responsibilities of establishing and extending the kingdom of Christ, are the true and scriptural baptizers. Being the guardians and dispensers of the truth they are the best judges of the

fitness of candidates for this holy ordinance. St. Paul, it is true, did not usually baptize, Christ sent him rather to preach the gospel. He only baptized in a few instances. Giving himself up to the highest function of the apostolical office, he left his converts to be baptized by others whom he doubtless appointed. See St. Peter, Acts x. 48. But in these instances baptism appears to be administered by apostolic authority and command, probably by the hands of their fellow labourers, so that it is evident the responsibility of having baptism administered was considered to be with those who for the time being were pastors and teachers in the Church of God. And with regard to the other sacrament, the Lord's supper, it is evident that if there is to be an evangelical teaching and training of candidates, and if a judgment has to be exercised in reference to the fitness of such candidates for communion ; the same pastoral institution is necessary as in baptism. He on whom the responsibility devolves of preparing through the other ministrations of the gospel, the penitent and believing individual for the obsignation of the Christian covenant, must himself confer the sign.* If the ministers of Christ are called

*Bishop Taylor on Luke xxii. 19, observes, "*Hoc facite*" "this do in remembrance of me." "This" cannot but relate to "*accepit, gratias egit, fregit, distribuit ; hoc facite.*" Here was no manducation expressed, and therefore, "*hoc facite*" concerns the apostles in the capacity of ministers: not as receivers but as consecrators and givers ; and if the institution had been represented in one scheme without this mysterious distinction and provident separation of employment, we had been eternally in a cloud, and have needed a new light to guide us ; but now the Spirit of God hath done it in the first fountains of Scripture."—Jeremy Taylor on the Office Ministerial, Sec. v. 4.

It must be observed, however, that this comment can only stand on the supposition that when the revelation spoken of in 1 Cor. xi., was made to

to feed the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers or pastors, well may it be reckoned a pastoral act to administer unto the members of that flock the sacramental emblems of His body and blood, especially remembering His own words, John vi. 51. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give him is my flesh which I shall give for the life of the world." To administer the sacrament, then, is not a priestly act exercised under the High Priest of our profession, as the Oxford school would teach; for Christ never transmitted his priesthood, but a pastoral act, performed by authority delegated from Christ as Chief Shepherd; for His pastorate He has transmitted, and put into commission.

Where then shall we find authority in the word of God, for that doctrine, which running through the whole of the Anglican teaching, invests the Church in her corporate character with transcendental influence, and that this influence solely connected with episcopal unity is indispensable to the validity of the sacraments? Men "may personify a body" as the Bishop of Chester says, "for the convenience of discourse, and by degrees forget that a community is not a person. And it is still worse, if that body which was first

St. Paul respecting the Lord's supper—the words of institution were communicated in different order from that in which they stand in the evangelists, and that too, for the purpose of putting it beyond doubt that all believers were to communicate, for in the epistle *φαγετε* comes before *ποιείτε*. Nor is this comment necessary, the right and obligation to administer the sacrament flows in a clear sequence from a scriptural appointment to the pastoral ministry.

personified, comes afterwards to be deified. Yet a process of this kind has gone on with regard to the Christian Church. When Jesus declared that he would build His Church upon a rock, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, he simply declared, that there should hereafter for ever be a body of men believing in him as the Son of God ; a body which Satan might assail, but should never succeed in destroying. He did not say, that he would set up a power on earth, which should possess his authority, act in his stead, and as his vicegerent, dispense his anger or his favour. We look in vain for a single sentence in which such a purpose is implied ; a purpose so important, and I may add so extraordinary, that it must have been written in words which none could fail to read. But advantage has been taken of the obscurity of language, to maintain and encourage this idea. The Church has been made, first, an abstraction, and then a person, and then a Saviour. The Church thus invested with divinity, has the minister as her visible representative ; and he explaining the prophetic anticipation, has assumed the place of God.”* So far the excellent prelate. And it may be further urged that God establishes his relations with man on the ground of individual penitence and faith, and not with a whole corporate body, on the very ground of its incorporation. The Scripture knows nothing of life in the Church, except so far as it is the total amount of individual life in the members. The Church is His body mystical, but not apart from himself, for the body cannot be where the

* Charge to his Clergy, 1841.

Head is not, and the members receive not life from the body, because they serve to compose it, but from the Head. The Temple, to use another Scripture figure, is living only when the stones are living. The relations of every individual, necessary and enjoined as Church communion is, are established immediately and directly with the author of grace, and therefore in the Sacrament there is no one comes between the Saviour and the recipient, no intervening medium is acknowledged, no influence transcendental or otherwise can interfere with that direct blessing which the Holy Ghost gives to his own institute when its rites are administered by a pastorate of his own raising, whether episcopal, presbyterian, or otherwise. Christ holds communion with His Church not by imparting himself unto the whole community in some mystical, unknown, and unfelt manner, and so as to be an insensate soul; I speak reverently, but by imparting himself to each individual believer, and dwelling in the temple of his heart, and therefore the terms of invitation are in strict accordance with this arrangement. Those terms are always "Come unto me," not unto the Church, "and I will give you rest." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Whether we approach the communion table, or the baptismal font, our thoughts are to be fixed on the Trinity alone, and not as far as faith is concerned, on the Church. Can the Church be both, suppliant and saviour, both receiver and giver? Can a man be holy as an integral part of the church, and yet unholy as an unconverted individual? Alas, it requires more than the learning and subtilty of even the Oxford schools to reconcile the hopeless confusion of this transcendental and Romanizing theory. The sacraments are ordinances

and means of grace instituted with the utmost solemnity. Being of a mixed nature themselves, they are adapted to man's mixed nature as consisting of body and soul, and while they are in the Church they confront the practical infidelity of the world, by their standing reference to the divine hand that instituted them, and overpower it by the evidence which they supply in proof of revelation.

The *Incarnation* may be deemed a sacramental mystery, and one that involves these less mysteries in its awful and ineffable depths. It was a divine plan for bringing down the fulness of mercy and grace unto human nature, through the visible medium of Christ's Humanity. If I then with the Socinian, were to acknowledge the outward sign alone in the Sacrament, and regard it as a mere memorial, or as a mere mode of symbolical teaching, would not the same disposition of mind, if carried out, lead me in the end to the rejection of my Saviour's divinity, as an expletive doctrine, or as a superstition? If the material and emblematic part be all in the Sacrament, may not, in the restless queries of our poor reason, the humanity of Christ be all in redemption, and may not his spotless life, as an example, his pure doctrine as a standard of truth, and his martyr death as an incentive, be all that we require for salvation? And if on the other hand with the Quaker and spiritualist, I were to reject the outward sign, and so to dissolve the Sacrament, would it not be in appearance presumptuously to assume that the human body, in our own case, is an incubus and a punishment, rather than an essential part of our nature, intended to be hereafter glorified in heaven? For if those sensible objects which have a real effect upon the body are put away, is it not to put away

all indication of the sanctification and redemption of our body? The visible sign and the invisible grace appear nearly every where in those important scripture transactions in which the relations of God are established with man. In the original garden of Eden there was a tree, of the fruit of which, man, had he continued innocent, might have partook and lived for ever. The dying Israelites might not be saved without looking to the uplifted sign of mercy, a sign, which indicated that the same nature which brought the curse should be the medium of the cure. The manna which fell on the ground every morning, fell by a miraculous *word*, and requiring faith in the receivers as it necessarily did, it involved a blessing, and taught that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live. The life which they had from the manna was a pledge of the better life they were called to have from the word. "They (the Israelites) did all eat the same spiritual meat."

The bow which God set in the cloud in the day of the flood, and which was the token of his covenant, and the pledge of the world's preservation, re-appears in the visions of Ezekiel. "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about." Ezekiel i. 28. It extended its mighty arch over that sapphire throne on which sat a glorified HUMAN form; it involved in its radiant sweep those nether clouds which might at one time pour floods of blessing, and at another, burst forth in storms, as though to teach, that throughout the domain of the Redeemer's kingdom, with all the apparently conflicting operations carried on therein, there should

be the visible institute in connection with the life giving Spirit. Nor does heaven itself reject the lesson, for although in eternal life all things signified are received, yet St. John in the visions of its bliss, assures us that the sign remains, "there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like to an emerald." Rev. 4. 3.

LETTER IV.

Baptism.

MY DEAR SIR,

In approaching the subject of Baptism, I may be allowed to observe, that it is so generally allowed to be the initiatory sacrament of christianity, and by consequence obligatory upon all who profess christianity, that I need not advert in any distinct and separate manner to those Scripture views of its importance with which we are so richly furnished. These views will be brought out in this and following letters. As for the mode, it is confidently assumed that the historical parts of Scripture have left it undetermined, that the preceptive parts have given no direction, that the original word itself may express either pouring or immersion; but that the concurrence of circumstances in the instances of Baptism which are found in the New Testament, joined to the typical consistency of the Sacrament, (the pouring out of water being a type of the pouring out or descent of the Holy Spirit) justifies what has been a very general practice of the Christian Church to administer by pouring or sprinkling. And first, as in the present state of the Church, Baptism is most usually administered to infants, let us advert to those Scriptures, which collated together, sanction the practice.

1. And in the first place ; the covenant made with Abraham, of which the seal was circumcision, was not solely of a national or political nature, but included all those evangelical blessings which in the economy of redemption, have been given to believers in all ages, for in the covenant, besides other engagements, God engages to be “a God to Abraham and his seed after him” (Gen. 17. 7. 14.) a promise this, which involves every thing that a redeemed man can receive. Collate this therefore with Gal. iii. 29, in which an inspired Apostle declares that Christians are “Abraham’s seed and heirs according to promise,” and the identity of the covenant of grace under both dispensations is apparent. Again, the chief engagement of the Abrahamic covenant, was, that in Abraham’s seed “all the nations of the earth should be blessed,” which interpreted by St. Paul chiefly means the justification of believers of all nations by faith in Christ. “And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith, preached the gospel before unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” (Gal. iii. 8. 9.) who “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of them that believe.” (Rom. iv. 11.)

Nothing is therefore clearer than that there has been one covenant of grace and salvation, the same in its provisions under the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian dispensations, though explained in different degrees of clearness, and as far as outward ratification is concerned, the only change is a change in the sign. Circumcision gives place to Baptism, called by St. Paul

(Col. ii. 12.) “the circumcision of Christ,” or as it must undoubtedly be understood “Christian circumcision,” even as in another case, the feast of the passover gives place to the Lord’s supper. Infants were admitted to the first covenant, and therefore have a right to the second, for that right is grounded on the same reasons, and on the same relationship in which they stand to God.

2. This will cast light in the second place upon the full import of the commission given by our Lord to his Apostles in Matthew xxviii, 19, “Go ye therefore and teach μαθητευσατε all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:” Μαθητευω which signifies to proselyte or disciple, may not be taken, standing alone, as implying to disciple by baptism, especially as that ordinance is separately mentioned, and hence the cavils of opposers of infant Baptism. But when it is remembered that the disciples were familiar with the fact that the infant children of proselytes were regularly admitted into the Jewish Church in their day by that rite, it cannot be supposed but that they understood our Lord to include infants in the *all nations* to whom he would have the gospel published, and the people of which he would have disciplined to the faith. And that such was the custom of the Jews has been indubitably proved by the most learned writers.*

* Non ignotus aut insuetus veteribus Judæis fuerat. Vel. I. Baptismus Maimon. in Issur. Biah. perek 13. Per tria Israelita (pariter et Ethnicus) in fœdus admissus est, Circumcisionem, Baptismus, et Sacrificium. Sic Talmud in

3. Equal light is likewise cast upon the exhortation of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, a day on which the Apostolic commission was to commence. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and your children." If the Apostle did not intend the infant children of the penitent Jews of that day to be baptized with their parents, no language could be more deceptive and misleading; for not only were the infants of natural Jews initiated into the Jewish Covenant on the eighth day by circumcision, but according to a long continued custom, the infants of proselytes,—by baptism, the very rite to which the Apostle was enjoining them to submit. Baptism unto Moses, and baptism in "nomen proselytæ" and John's baptism, the Jews were familiar with, but now they were to have baptism in the name of Christ, not that the Apostle used this phrase to exclude the Trine formula, but to distinguish this last as eminently Christian baptism.

Jebamoth perek 4. Proselytæ admissi sunt per Baptismum, sive solum, sive ut plerumque cum circumcissione conjunctum. Vel 2. Baptismus infantum. Talmud in Centuboth perek I. Rab. Hona dicit, Parvulum Baptizant ex mandato Consistorii * * * Maimon. de Servis c. 8. Israelita qui ethnicum infantem invenit, eumque baptizat in nomen Proselytæ ecce Proselytæ est.

Lightfoot in Poli Synop. Critic. on John i. 25.

More largely also Ibid. Matth. iii. 6.

"The Jerusalem Misna says 'that if a girl born of heathen parents be made a proselyte after she be three years and a day old, then she is not to have such and such privileges there mentioned,' and that of the Babylon edition says 'that if she be made a proselyte before that age she shall have the said privileges.' Both agreeing (as Selden reciting those places shews) that a child of never so little age might by their custom be made a proselyte.

Dr. Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap. p. 15. 16, Oxford, 1836.

4. You will be familiar too with that well known passage in I Cor. vii. 14. where St. Paul calls the children of believers, and even where but one of the parents is a believer, "holy"—separated to God;—standing in a peculiar relation to Him. Calvin has an admirable comment on the passage "But who can reconcile this saying with what he asserts elsewhere, "we are all by nature the children of wrath," Ep. ii. 3. as also the saying of David, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," Psalm li. 5. I reply, the propagation of sin and condemnation in the seed of Adam is universal, all therefore are included under one condemnation, whether they descend from the faithful or the impious; neither are believing or faithful children generated according to the flesh, they are rather regenerated by the Spirit. The natural condition is therefore the same in all, that the liability to eternal death might not be but through sin. But the Apostle here treats of the special privilege of the children of believers,—that it flows from the benefit of a covenant which (*quo super veniente*) coming upon them from above, takes away the original curse.

Thus St. Paul argues in Rom. ii. 16. that the whole of Abraham's seed is holy, because God made with him a covenant of life. "If the root be holy" he says, "the branches are therefore holy," and God calls those his children who are descended from Israel.

Now the wall is broken down, the same covenant of salvation which at first was made with the seed of Abraham is made good to us. Wherefore if the children of believers are thus selected out of the common mass of mankind, that they may be gathered unto God, why are

we to drive them from the sign (that is the sign of the Christian covenant)?

If God admits them by his word into his church, why should we deny them that sign? How that the offspring of the faithful (degeneret) may fall away, is to be found in another place of which we have treated, 11th and 12th ch. Romans.*

Your children are holy says the Apostle, and notwithstanding whatever might be said in the case of unbaptized children, which will be properly considered in its place, it is not to be recklessly assumed that the Apostle means they are holy, independent of baptism.

On the contrary, as external washing in the Old Testament was considered a separation to God or sanctifying, and as "to sanctify" in the New Testament sometimes signifies relative consecration, John 17. 19, Eph. 5, 26. spiritual sanctification being usually spoken of as wrought by the Spirit, or by the truth, or in some way of especial distinction, and further, as our Lord in conversing with Nicodemus, certainly spoke of being born of water and of the Spirit as the way to the kingdom of heaven, it is most natural to refer the holiness mentioned in this passage to the holiness of the covenanted state of christianity, admission to which is by baptism. By privilege of birth then, such children as the Apostle mentions, are "sanctitati designati," designed to holiness,† by baptism they are "holy" *αγιοι* that is, separated to God.

* Calvin in I. Cor. vii. 14. Sed qui haec sententia, &c.

† Tertullian.

5. Infant children are declared by Christ to be members of His Church, Mark x. 14, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God * * * and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them."

It is of no use with some opposers of infant baptism to represent our Lord as saying here, that the kingdom of God is composed of such like, for unless there were something in the case of these little children which betokened a gracious and accepted condition, how could the members of the kingdom of God be like them? The phrase, "kingdom of God" must be taken here to signify the state of glory, into which none can enter who are not redeemed by Christ, and stand in a vital relation to Him, and are members of his mystic body the Church. Our Lord declares in John iii. 3, that none can enter the kingdom of God, who are not born of water and the Spirit, and here asserts that little children are to be considered members of that kingdom, the initial state of which is the Church on earth. As those children whom he actually blessed, being of Jewish parents, were probably admitted into the Church by circumcision, or at least as they must undoubtedly have been considered members of it, so we see that baptism was not administered unto them, not in their case being necessary; but when we apply the Saviour's words to infant children under his own dispensation henceforward, and when the Jewish sign should be done away, it is impossible to avoid coming to the conclusion that their admission into the Church by external baptism is according to the Divine mind.

6. We learn much, also, from the enlarged and general manner in which the terms of the gospel blessings are stated; especially in Rom. v. 18, "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." Infants are included in the "all men" upon whom judgment has come to condemnation, for they die. If therefore they are naturally involved in the condemnation, then according to the reasoning of the Apostle, for at least his reasoning will apply to them, though they are not mentioned, they are by covenant of redemption, interested to an equal extent in that free gift which comes upon all men (*εἰς το* in order to) unto justification of life. Adults attain the end of this gift, "justification of life;" through evangelical repentance and faith; infants, not being capable of either, attain it as all infants Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian have done, by grace imparted in an unknown manner, though attested by an outward rite: and as infants cannot receive or believe the word, a sacrament is the only mode, or at least the fittest, so far as we know, in which the infinite goodness of God can be signified individually towards them.

If it be urged by the opposers of sacraments that the benefit above, flows upon all infants baptized or unbaptized, they are to be reminded, whatever may be the case with infants that cannot have baptism, that covenant blessings are always involved with covenant obedience, of which obedience submission to the sacramental ordinance is asserted to be one particular.

7. It must be remembered too, that all children are born under the gracious government of the Son of God;

a government not of strict law, but rather of law providing for the consistent exercise of mercy. The children of the evangelical covenant, therefore, especially stand related to God the Father as His property, and it is only through anticipation of redemption that they are permitted to come into life. Ezek. xviii. 4: "Behold, all souls," saith the Lord, "are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." Yet, though His property, they are disinherited from their original adoption, which otherwise they would have enjoyed by being the unfallen sons of unfallen Adam, "who was the son of God." Still, as there is in them nothing of actual sin or unbelief, as there is in adult transgressors, to hinder or obstruct the force of the intercession of the great Reconciler, Christ, they are clearly placed under the ministry or word of reconciliation, and are admitted to its benefits by baptism, which benefits are continually received according to their covenant faithfulness through life. Baptism is to be considered one of the acts of the ministry of reconciliation, for, although St. Paul says, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," yet he did not mean to assert that baptism did not belong to his office, because he did baptize in a few instances; but rather, that as instruction in the case of adults preceded baptism, so in a heathen land, where all needed that instruction, his principal office was to preach the gospel, leaving other ministers to affix the seal of faith, where faith should have been previously produced by hearing. The Apostle did not undervalue baptism, but assigned it its proper place, in subordination to preaching.

8. It is indubitable that the Apostles baptized whole

households, in which it is most reasonable to conclude that there were infant children. The houses or households, for instance, of the keeper of the prison at Philippi, of Lydia, of Stephanus.

9. It is a fact that under the old dispensation, covenants were made for children by their parents. Deut. xxix. 10, 12: "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord, your captains with all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives, and the stranger, that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God.

10. The church of Christ in all ages has practised the administration of baptism to infants from the times of the apostles until now, as gathered by evidence from Iranæus, Justin, Origin, Cyprian, Ambrose, and others downward; and has never been opposed but by the visionary Tertullian, the Anabaptists of Germany, and the Anti-pædo-Baptists of modern days.

All these reasons, my dear sir, considered in their harmony and connexion, amount to a scriptural assurance that the baptism of infants is according to the mind of Christ, and sanctioned by His authority. It is true there is no plain precept on the subject; but the ancient ritual admission of little children into the church was so common and well understood, that if it were intended to discontinue the practice under Christianity, it is in the highest degree probable that there would have been a prohibitory clause on the subject.

Public worship was not enjoined under the New Testament. Its existence was assumed, for the obligation to observe it was so universally admitted and felt, that the injunction needed no republication. I am disposed to think there is much divine wisdom displayed in

the omission of any express direction relative to the baptism of infants ; for as the benefits of grace are applied to them during the state of infancy in a different manner from what they are to adults, it is very likely that positive and direct assertions in the Scripture respecting them would have led to painful and perhaps hurtful dissensions respecting the period of infancy, that is to say, respecting who were irresponsible infants, and who were not.

Let infant baptism be once established by clear inference from the Scriptures, and the covenant of grace and its harmonies become innumerable. It harmonizes with the true character of a Christian family. Such a family is no other than a church in a believer's house, and in the case we are supposing, all in the household partake of equal privileges. There are no Gentiles in the happy group ; no outer-court worshippers. There is no middle wall of partition separating the sick and suffering babe into a different relation to God from that in which the yearning and sorrowing parent stands, and nearly every family trouble is swallowed up in that full and solemn declaration, "I will be a God to thee and to thy children after thee." Infant baptism harmonizes, too, with the character of the Christian church, regarded as an institution to train us for heaven. The Chief Shepherd has enjoined upon his servants to feed the lambs ; they are His lambs prior to their being fed, and baptism being administered by the pastors of the church, in anticipation of their repentance, faith and holiness, these pastors themselves are bound by a solemn obligation to provide a religious training for their early members, while they, the subjects of the ordinance, perceiving that the mark

of the Christian profession is upon them, feel, as the mind opens and expands, how just and right it is that they should be wholly given to the service of the Lord. It harmonizes with the character of God as a Father, for as our infants are naturally disinherited by the sin of Adam, it exhibits His adopting love initially restoring them by grace to His family, from which they can only be excluded by wilful sin.

It harmonizes with the infinite fulness of the divine mercy, which proceeds in a vital tide from its everlasting fountain, and overflows this world of sin and sorrow every where, except where proud transgression rears its high bank against it; infant baptism marks the progress of this living stream until we trace it into eternity, and there upon the sea of glass before the throne (the antitype of Solomon's laver) we trace unnumbered myriads of glorified infants, who sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, for they have been gathered from both dispensations; and the sea of glass is mingled with fire. The purging Spirit and the cleansing flood are exhibited in their relation to each other, for ever and ever. Rev. xv. 2.

Your's, Dear Sir,

LETTER V.

Baptism.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will cheerfully and devoutly own with me, that all the institutions of Christ's Church are connected with grace. The sacred pipes in the vision of the prophet conveying oil to the burning lamps, were intended to typify real channels of blessing, Zech. iv. And assuredly, if there be a real blessing granted to faith, there is a sufficient warrant in the divine word, for faith to be exercised in the baptismal ordinance when it is reverently and devoutly administered.

We have in this ordinance, the intercession of Christ, unhindered in its efficacy, as far as the infant is concerned, by actual sin, the offering of the Church's wave sheaf before the Lord by his ministers, the prayers of assembled saints, the supplicating yearnings of parental love, and besides all these, the obedient submission to an ordinance which Christ himself appointed, and which in the ordinary way he has made the gate to salvation, an ordinance in which he declares to the recipient "I am thy God," that is at the present moment, "I am all to thee that thou canst need." Surely this is bringing tithe into the Lord's store-house, and drawing near to prove Him, and if He open not the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing under such circumstances, then

do I utterly misunderstand the nature of a sacramental ordinance, and also the nature of the gospel covenant. Every infant is a child of fallen Adam, and as such is naturally involved in guilt and condemnation, and when God declares to such an one "I am thy God" as He does in this the sacrament of His grace, are we to suppose the declaration to be an empty sound?

Whatever gracious eye as "Saviour of all, and especially of them that believe," Christ may cast upon infants previous to baptism, it is in the ordinance that they are *declaratively* accepted, and as their acceptance is grounded on the christian covenant, and not on the natural benignity [which God bears to all his creatures, the christian sacrament is devoutly to be regarded as the expression of this acceptance. John the Baptist was sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, that is, previous to the reception of any sacrament, yet this was an extraordinary instance, and moreover, as he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he, there must, to say the least, be an influence of the Spirit resting on christian baptism when devoutly administered, which shall make the children of believing parents to be as much blessed, though perhaps not so much gifted, as was the Baptist. So far a reverent view of the Scriptures, and of the economy of God, leads us to speak positively as to the fact, that there is a blessing in every devout baptism, but as to the nature of that blessing, it would not only be useless to enquire, and the enquiry, if successful, would not lead to any valuable purpose. It would not make adult responsibility in the least degree the less, nor lessen the necessity of personal repentance, faith, and holiness,

when the time should come for their developement.

When infants are appointed to die, it would not be too much to say that their compassionate Redeemer might in the very ordinance of baptism look forward to that event, and completely regenerate them unto Himself, but who could make this a positive doctrine without His authority? Dying infants need regeneration, and baptism pledges and assures it, to be given in some mode or other, and all I mean by asserting this, is to shew, that it is not contrary to the spirit of pure and vital christianity to believe, that in a few cases of this kind the thing signified may be given simultaneously with the sign. Still this point is no doctrine. The living Church has no interest in dying infants beyond that of following with a spiritual eye their certain and direct flight to the paradise of God.

It will also be granted that some christian children have been known to grow up from infancy, under the influence of a grace so peculiar and effectual as to rise into the full christian character, and into the exercise and enjoyment of justifying faith and communion with God, who have not been able to remember any sensible time of transition, and still more will it be granted in the case of adults, that when the candidate for baptism is a true penitent, and accompanies his submission to the ordinance with a full affiance in the atoning blood of Christ, and a full committal of his soul and its interests into his hands, that pardon and regeneration might take place in that very hour. So it often was, very probably, in the days of the Apostles; and so it is reported to have

been in the early days of Methodism.* Still the effect last spoken of, in both cases, is produced as the Scripture uniformly asserts, through the instrumentality of true faith in the recipient, rather than the application of water irrespective of it, so that we are at the utmost distance from the *opus operatum* doctrine of Rome, a doctrine from which, as far as it respects baptism, our modern Anglicans have scarcely varied a shade. Notwithstanding therefore that we are bound to acknowledge a blessing in baptism, it is a blessing which comes far short of that great renovating change which the Scriptures term regeneration or the new birth, and which is

* Mr. Wesley testifies as follows:—"Journal, May, 1738. I believe till I was ten years old, I had not sinned away that 'washing of the Holy Ghost,' which was given me in baptism, having been strictly educated, and carefully taught that I could only be saved by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God, in which I was diligently instructed." At the same time, although Mr. Wesley naturally uses the language of that Church to which then he was so attached, and calls the blessing which he received a "washing of the Holy Ghost," yet, taking this confession in connexion with the account of his religious state at that time, it is by no means certain that he regarded the blessing spoken of as the "regeneration," or "being born of God," of the Scriptures, as connected with the privilege of not committing sin. Journal, vol. ii. p. 387. October 16, 1756, "I baptized Hannah C——, late a Quaker. God as usual bore witness to his ordinances. A solemn awe spread over the whole congregation, and many could not refrain from tears."

P. 459. October 2nd, 1758. "I preached at Bradford (noon and night,) and met the stewards of the Wiltshire and Somersetshire societies. In the evening I baptized a young woman deeply convinced of sin. We all found the power of God was present to heal, and she herself felt what she had not words to express."

P. 523. Feb. 5, 1760. "I baptized a gentlewoman at the Foundry, and the peace she immediately found was a fresh proof that the outward sign duly received is always accompanied with the inward grace."

Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley. March 15th, 1743. "I baptized a Quaker, who received forgiveness of sins in that hour."

solely produced in the corrupt heart of man by the energy of the Holy Ghost, in answer to penitent prayer and faith.

This throws us at once into controversy with our Tractarian writers, and to the establishment of the position that baptism is not pardon or regeneration.

The regeneration, or being born again of the Scriptures "is that mighty change in man wrought by the Holy Spirit, by which the dominion which sin has over him in his natural state, and which he deplores and struggles against in his penitent state, is broken and abolished, so that with full choice of will and the energy of right affections, he serves God freely," and "runs in the way of his commandments." *

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." But now being free from sin and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life." Such is the nature of regeneration and its way of working. Moreover the Apostle's argument in Rom. viii. 1, absolutely requires us to take the phrase "in Christ Jesus" as expressive of the state of one who is justified by faith alone, and to whom there is now no condemnation. Let any one read what goes before and what follows after in this Epistle, without regard to the divisions of chapter and verse, and he cannot come to any other conclusion. He then who is thus "*in Christ*,"

* Watson's Theological Institutes Vol. 2, p. 476.

(Rom. viii. 1.) is said in another place by the Apostle to be “a new creature.” II Cor. v. 17. and also Gal. vi. 15, where he asserts that nothing but a new creature availeth, clearly shewing that in the Apostle’s mind, regeneration or the new creature, is one of the immediate results of our being justified by faith. So Wesley, “Who is then a christian according to the light which God has vouchsafed his people? He that being justified by faith hath peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and *at the same time* “is born again,” “born from above,” “born of the Spirit,” inwardly changed from the image of the devil to that image of God wherein he was created.”* Regeneration or being born again, is always in the Scriptures spoken of as concomitant with pardon, yet being “born of water,” the reception of baptism, does not *per se* simply, that being born of the Spirit, which is *essentially* connected with pardon.

Rome has taught the contrary, and has thereby opened the way to all the fearful consequences of the opus operatum doctrine. Hence her Council of Trent teaches that “*infantes obicem non ponentes*” are justified in baptism, and in all her forms carries out the doctrine of Augustine, that it washes away not only original sin, but all actual sins as well, committed previous to its administration. In the same direction runs our modern Anglican teaching.† But the Epistles to the Romans and

* Sermon on God’s Vineyard, Vol. vii. p. 205.

† Oxford Tracts, No. 67, throughout, and Pusey’s Letter to the Bishop of Oxford. Bishop Taylor too. Baptism is *ανεκλόγιστος αφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν*, an entire full forgiveness of sins, so that they shall never be called again to scrutiny.

Omnia dæmonis arma

His merguntur aquis, quibus ille renascitur infans,

Qui captivus erat.

Works, p. 1, sec. 9, p. 118.

Galatians, put the subject of a sinner's obtaining pardon in a light so strong and clear, that it is a wonder traditionary theology should ever have been able to obscure it. They shew that in the case of actual transgressors, to whom alone and not to infants the gospel is proclaimed, it is faith alone which justifies, and introduces them into the grace in which believers stand, enabling them to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Faith is the condition by which they are accepted into Christian covenant. Baptism is the seal by which God pledges himself to make all the blessings of that covenant sure, and by the reception of which seal they pledge themselves at the same time to affiance in the divine veracity; they set to their seals that God is true. Baptism is not, therefore, pardon or regeneration itself, but a visible action, signifying that God, according to the fidelity of the recipient *will* pardon and regenerate, and even more than this, for this is only part of our salvation, it is a pledge that he will give every other blessing which flows from the conjoint offices of the sacred Trinity, such as dominion over sin, joy in the Holy Ghost, help in every time of need, victory over death, and the resurrection of the body. Dr. Taylor himself, with singular confusion of his own doctrine, says, "Baptism is not to be estimated as one act, transient and effective to single purposes, but it is an entrance to a conjugation and a state of blessings.—Works, p. 1, s. 9, s. 7. To call baptism pardon or regeneration, using these terms in their scriptural sense, is therefore not only to set aside God's method of justifying the ungodly, but to confuse the offices of the blessed Three in One.

The words of St. Peter, taken from the peroration and

application of his first sermon, have been quoted as containing the doctrine of baptismal pardon. With what reason let us see. The Apostle's words are, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts ii. 38. No one, in the first place, has a right to consider the words of the servant, apart from the scope of the great commission of his Lord, and it is indubitable that in that commission, faith, which alone justifies, is made to precede baptism. In this place, then, the Apostle exhorts first and chiefly to repentance as including faith, and then secondarily, to baptism as the outward expression of faith. As far as this ordinance is concerned in the remission of sins, the phrase εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν means, that it is *in order to* remission,* just as you would have to enter the door *in order to* gain the holiest place of the temple. It *introduces* to covenant blessings, which involve remission. The ancient creeds which allude to this passage of the Apostle preserve his form of expression without any further exegetical remark.†

If absolute baptismal justification be argued from the words of the Apostle Peter εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, then what sense are we to put upon the words of John the Baptist, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν? It is not contended even by Anglicans that the baptism of John conferred any grace, not even that of repentance. So far from it indeed,

* This sense of the proposition is found in Rom. xvi. 26, and elsewhere.

Bishop Pearson, Art. 10. p. 538.

repentance was a pre-requisite on the part of candidates for his baptism. Men were "baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins," (Matt. iii. 6) and were thus inducted into his dispensation, which was one of expectancy rather than enjoyment, the assured and special expectancy of a spiritual Saviour, a MIGHTY ONE, who should, by his fiery baptism, save them from those sins which in John's baptism they publicly confessed.

The phraseology in the original of both places as regards the immediate effect of Baptism is the same; and therefore there is no more room to predicate pardon in the ordinance necessarily and *ipso facto* in the case of the Apostle, than repentance in that of the Baptist. "It is plain that those persons who were thus converted by the first sermon of St. Peter, and were instantly baptized under the promise of receiving remission of their sins, were justified, says Bishop Tomline, by faith, and by faith only."*

The ratification of a covenant engagement, may without at all impugning its validity, precede the actual deliverance of its benefits.

Here, it is true the learned Bishop Pearson says, that, "it is certain that Baptism as it was instituted by Christ after the pre-administration of St. John, wheresoever it was received with all qualifications necessary in the person accepting, and conferred with all things necessary to be performed by the person administering, was most infallibly efficacious as to this particular, that is, to the remission of all sins committed before the administration

* Valpy, Greek Testament, v. 3 p. 134. In Loc. Acts ii. 38.

of this sacrament ;” * but then this saving clause respecting all things necessary on the part of the recipient and of the administrator, throws open the enquiry as to what these conditions really are ; and how far evangelical penitence, and faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ, are necessary, and how far they come in here, the apostolic writings before mentioned shew. Joy and holiness, as far as I can gather, followed all the instances of individual pardon mentioned in the New Testament, as indeed must be the case from the doctrinal statement in Rom. i. 2, 3; and when we consider the previous state of guilt and condemnation in which these persons previously were, we see it impossible that their joy should suddenly have proceeded from a consciousness that they possessed all qualifications necessary for the acceptance of the sacrament, leading them to infer that their pardon by the simple application of water was sealed. Pardon, and the overflowing love and peace which accompanied it, were things too solemn to be attested by, and derived from, a man’s own conviction, that he received the sacrament rightly—a conviction at all times liable to be shaken, and therefore, the blessed state of mind which followed the primitive baptisms, was from the Spirit’s own seal in the way of spirit operating upon spirit, and as distinguished from the material seal of visible sacraments. 2 Cor. i. 22, Eph. i. 13. 4 c, 30.† Hooker, who seems at first sight,

* Expos. of the Creed. Art. Forgiveness of Sins.

†II Cor. i. 22. Who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. *Largiendo nobis varia ejus charismata, quæ sigilli, instar nos probent veros Dei nuntios ac ministros. Estius in Poli Synop. Eph. i. 13.*

• * after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

to deny that sacraments are “signs or testimonies assuring us of grace received before,” more fully conveys to our minds his meaning, when in his entire phrase he says that they are “not naked” signs, by which he allows that they may be obsignations of grace received before, yet clothed at the same time and in addition with a higher efficacy. At the same time, nothing can be more guarded or more in consistency with the spirit of the gospel than the following statement. “That sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural is not in all respects as food unto natural life, because *they contain in themselves no vital force or efficacy*; they are not physical but moral instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship which, unless we perform as the author of grace requireth they are unprofitable. For all receive not the grace of God which receive the sacraments of His grace.”* Besides, if it were certain that in every case of adult

Sed hic quærendum quid sit obsignatio. Illustris hæc similitudo sæpius usurpatur ab Apostolo in fidei et sanctificatione negotio, ut I Cor. i. 6, 7. II Cor. i. 21, 22, Eph. iv. 30. Resp. i. Est interna fidei confirmatio quam Spiritus S. operatur. Sed hæc finis est obsignationis 2. Est Spiritus S. presentia efficax, quâ excitati clamamus, Abba, Pater. Sed hæc potius sigillum est quo obsignamur. 3. Est imaginis sigilli in re obsignata impressio, &c. h. e. imaginis Spiritus S. sive Dei in anima piorum impressio, qua Deo similes, vel Divinæ naturæ participes fimus. Zanchius. in Poli Synop.

Ep. iv. 30. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. *In quo, vel per quem signati, vel obsignati estis* (in anima, in qua Conditoris signum, figuram et notam i. e. gratiam et sanctitatem habetis, quem Spiritum velut impressum vobis sigillum, accepistis, qui Spiritus vos regeneravit, suamque vobis imaginem impressit. *Signati estis*, internâ et copiosâ gratiâ quâ tanquam peculiari nota filiorum Dei, ab omnibus aliis dignoscemini. Menoch. Est. and Zanch. in Poli Synop.

* Hooker's Eccles. Pol. Book 5, s. 57.

baptism there were a true credence of all Christian truths, yet this credence is not every thing which belongs to the faith by which we are justified, for the "devils also believe." St. Paul describes justifying faith as believing *with the heart*, language, this, which asserts the full concurrence of the affections. No one denies the propriety of admitting to Christian baptism a serious awakened person who has a true belief in Christian doctrines, even if he cannot as yet be said to have that particular faith which justifies, for his submission to the rite is a pledge on his part that he will seek, and in fact that he actually therein seeks that gift, while on the part of God, the same baptism is amongst other things a pledge that it shall be given, for faith is the "gift of God." But on the other hand a serious and careful collocation of the Scriptures, brings us with increased clearness to our conclusion, that pardon is not necessarily connected with baptism, but rather that this sacrament is an infallible pledge to the faithful soul that pardon and all things necessary to salvation shall be given, while on the part of the recipient it is a voluntary engagement to submission, obedience, faith, and holiness in whatever degrees they may be obtained. If the water and the Spirit were inseparably connected, would St. Paul have thanked God that he had baptized none but Crispus and Gaius?

It is necessary that there should be an external element in baptism, in order that the most wicked and hardened of men may perceive that God has made provision for his creatures to hold communion with Him, and in order that we all might perceive that our whole persons, including body and soul, are involved in the

covenant of redeeming mercy. But baptism itself is not that communion. The wants of man's spiritual nature require to be supplied. The awakened soul pines after its adorable Original, and is restless until it finds Him in actual fellowship. The most devout and sincere Romanists have felt this. In the writings of Augustine, and Thomas a Kempis, there is an anxious groaning of spirit after an unfelt good, which could never be embodied in sacramental and external expression. When a penitent and bruised spirit bows before the throne of infinite holiness in the utmost affliction, either God has provided some method of reaching the very heart and soul of the suppliant and of pervading it by His pacific presence, or else the beautiful harmony and adaptation which appears in external nature, totally disappears when we enter the world of souls.

So should we argue if the Scriptures were silent on this subject; but we are not left to such a silence, so full and to the point are the words of the great Intercessor, John xiv. 16, 17. "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you."

I am, Dear Sir,

LETTER VI.

Baptism.

MY DEAR SIR,

In prosecuting this subject, I shall next endeavour to examine those Scriptures which have been most frequently quoted in defence of baptismal regeneration and justification, feeling persuaded, that so far from their serving this cause, a candid and serious collation of them will militate against it. My decided conviction is, that these passages rather stand as a solemn guard against such a doctrine. The first, and that upon which the most stress is usually laid, is John iii. 5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

It must be asserted, in the first place, against what might be termed Quakerism, that the terms "water" and "spirit" are not exegetical of each other; but that the first signifies external baptism, and the second gospel grace; the two not necessarily and simultaneously accompanying, but standing in a peculiar relation to each other. "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of scripture," says Hooker, "that when a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst."*

And the more extensively this rule is applied, the more will its truth be apparent.* The water is the outward sign, but still a sign ordained by God, a subject of distinct reference, and connected in his gracious promise with admission into His kingdom. The condition is, “except *ἐὰν μὴ τις* *any one* be born of water *and* of the Spirit, he cannot enter.” Beza. Maldon. Lightfoot. Menoch. Scaliger. Explaining, of course, these words of our Lord in harmony with his other words in Mark xvi. 16.

But, in order to see the full force and import of these words, it is necessary to advert to that discourse with Nicodemus, from which they are taken. Nicodemus was a Jew, and a ruler of the Jews,—a member of the

* There are many Christians, beside the opponent of Hooker, and beside the modern Quakers, who teach that in this passage nothing more is meant than, Except a man be born of the Spirit, as represented by water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And they teach too, that the declaration of John the Baptist, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” is to be similarly explained, and that nothing was meant but the “Holy Ghost” exhibited by the ideal emblem of fire. But all this rests upon the frail assumption, that in the fulfilment of the predictive declaration of the Baptist, nothing but the Spirit was given; whereas it is almost certain, that at the day of Pentecost literal fire sat upon each apostle’s head; for although the text Acts ii. 3, says, “cloven tongues *like as* of fire,” yet, unless that searching, illuminating, and purifying element be intended in material emblem to represent the manifold energy of the Spirit, as well as to shew by its lambent form the multitude of tongues which should proclaim the Spirit’s doctrine, there wants a reason why fire should be mentioned at all, especially when we contrast the descent of the Spirit upon Christ with that upon his Apostles. Say that the fire was emblematic, still it was as divinely recognized and appointed as the reality to which it referred. Say that this part of the promise was fulfilled only in the case of a few in the early church, so it was only to a comparative few in the early church that the promise of miraculous powers (Mark xvi. 17) to believers in Christ was fulfilled, and yet both cases refer to the same covenant of mercy, and the same design of building the christian church.

ecclesiastical assembly, (John iii. 1, and vii. 50), and as such, must have been perfectly acquainted with the fact, that baptized proselytes among his countrymen, were termed *regenerated*, or *new born*. The authorities which prove that this was the case may be seen in Lightfoot on the place;* and Dr. Wall asserts confidently, that amongst other things, one thing observable about the Jewish baptism of proselytes was this, “that they called such an one’s baptism his *new birth*, *regeneration*, or *being born again*.†

The idea that they attached to this was, that he had entered into new relationships, and was dead to all his former Gentile relatives and associations, as well as that he was admitted to the privileges, as they understood them, of the Abrahamic covenant. In a conventional sense, then, the stranger who entered the Jewish pale by baptism, entered upon a new life and new prospects. This was the state of the case when our Lord conversed with Nicodemus. Nicodemus appears to have had convictions in his mind of the divine authority of our Lord as a teacher, and therefore approaches him with this declaration: “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.” John iii. 2. Pertinent and correctly reasoned as this saying was, our Lord was willing to test the ruler as to how far his faith in divine teaching extended, and therefore proposed the

* Agnovit aliqualem regenerationem fieri per proselytismum.—Maimon. Gentilis proselyta factus—ecce est ut infans jam natus; nec enim cognationem suam Gentilem amplius agnoscere debet.—Lightfoot in Poli Synop. John iii. 5.

† Dr. Wall Introd. 5, 6.

following solemn truth: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born ἀνωθεν from above,† he cannot see the kingdom of God," ver. 3. Every way this reply confounded the notions of the enquirer; for, in the first place, although he knew of a conventional regeneration, a "*renatus*," or "παλιγγενεσία," accordingly as the writer might express it, which involves no spiritual blessing, yet the idea of birth from above, a mysterious new nature from heaven, carried him out of his depth; and in the second place, though he knew that a Gentile must be born again in the Jewish sense, before he could enter the bond of the great covenant, yet, when our Lord said, εἰ μὴ τις "except *any one*, be he Jew or Gentile, born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," then his wonder was complete. Under the influence of bewilderment, he uttered that simple question which is detailed in the sacred text; and when, after receiving a fuller explanation of the subject, he further asked, "How can these things be?" our Lord replied, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things!" As a master in Israel, Nicodemus ought to have known the Old Testament Scriptures, and their evangelical meaning, and especially the meaning of that great promise in Ezekiel xxxvi. 26: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you. A

† ἀνωθεν. This is the constant meaning of the word, both in the writings of St. John and the general Scriptures. It is the full meaning; for to say respecting a man who exists, that *his* being born is a being born again, is, if nothing more were meant, little better than uttering a truism. There is likewise a singular agreement amongst Greek fathers, in interpreting as above, and in a question of interpretation, this is important.

NEW HEART ALSO will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them ;” and this would have prepared him for the Saviour’s doctrine. But in the age of Nicodemus, these spiritual views, partly by sin and partly by corrupt tradition, generally speaking, were lost ; and as a judicial consequence, Rabbinical puerility was extreme. The ruler knew of no new state but that into which the proselyte entered, when, from being a heathen, he became “ a debtor to do the whole law,” into which state he was admitted by the effusion of water. Our Lord then, to establish this matter of Christian regeneration for ever, and in beautiful harmony with the Old Testament, declares, “ Except any one be born of water *and* of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” He found water baptism, and allowed it to remain, because of its emblematic and typical significancy, just as for the same reason he allowed the paschal supper to remain ; but he now asserts that there must be in every believer’s case another baptism superadded to that of water—the baptism of the Spirit ; not necessarily implying, as I said before, that both occur at the same time, but implying that they stand to each other in the relation of sign and thing signified ; and that thus to be baptized into Christ is to “ put on Christ,” or to profess his religion, which makes no distinction, as the Sanhedrim did, between Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female. Gal. iii. 28. The ‘ kingdom of heaven ’ signifies the state of glory, for the enjoyment of which the church on earth is the preparatory institution.

I am quite willing to allow with the Tracts,† that this text is a key to other Scriptures, though it appears to me to unlock their meaning in a manner far different from that in which they would represent. It represents the water and the Spirit as perfectly distinct, and the doctrine being given unto those who already *had* water baptism and conventional regeneration, it had the direct effect of teaching that the spiritual renewal of man's nature was solely effected by the Holy Ghost, and it likewise stood as a solemn and impressive contradiction of the *Jewish* doctrine of regeneration. That blessing under the gospel dispensation (though substantially known to good men before) was now to become positive and spiritual, answering to the predictive views laid down in the Old Testament, and to be more developed by apostolic teaching in the New, which teaching we have already described. And accordingly, as though the apostles dreaded that our Lord's words should be forgotten, and that Jewish ideas on regeneration should prevail, in every important place after this in which baptism is spoken of, the sign and the thing signified are carefully distinguished, and the spiritual and saving effects are ascribed to the latter.

This will appear evident from the following passages :

Acts ii. 38, which has already been considered in one respect, and it is now recalled for a moment to show that according to the Apostle's exhortation, repentance, and faith, and baptism, were required in the first place; and then there should follow as a result, the "gift of the Holy Ghost,"—the renewing Spirit.

† Tracts for the Times, No. 67, p. 48.

Acts xxii. 16. “And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.”—Following Hooker’s rule, we must interpret the “washing” in the text of the washing of baptism, as nearly all orthodox writers have done. The Apostle Paul was at this time an afflicted penitent; and though he was exhorted to the outward ordinance, yet he was directed to look for the blessing he sought in the exercise of calling upon the name of the Lord. And need I say that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”? Rom. x. 13. These are the Apostle’s own words, rendered still more impressive from his own subsequent happy experience. If an unreserved committal of his guilty but stricken soul into the hands of Christ accompanied the ordinance, the answer to his prayer being granted, baptism might be said to wash away his sins, and Ananias was enabled to speak so boldly and believingly as he did, from the miraculous character of the whole transaction. Baptism at this time might be the channel of the blessing, but calling upon the name of the Lord in contrition and faith was the instrumental means by which it was obtained.

Eph. v. 26. “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it with the washing of water by the word.”—The doctrine of this passage is, that Christ by his atoning sacrifice procured for the church the cleansing influence of the Holy Spirit, here exhibited in the emblem of washing by water; and as literal water is used in baptism, the rules of sound interpretation oblige us to adhere to the literal sense, and to understand the Apostle as referring to baptism. He speaks, however,

of the entire sacrament, the inward grace, as well as the outward sign. Zanch. Zeger. Menoch.—To this effect also Calvin, whose well-weighed sentiments are as follows:—"To internal and secret sanctification he adds also the external symbol, because in this its confirmation is made visible, as though he should assert of this sanctification that its pledge is given in baptism.* We need, however, a sound exposition here, lest, led by a perverse superstition, men should make to themselves (as often often happens) an idol out of the sacrament. If Paul teaches that we are washed by baptism, it is because God testifies therein to our washing, and at the same

* Internæ et arcanæ sanctificationi addit etiam externum symbolum ; quia in hoc conspicua est illius confirmatio, acsi diceret illius sanctificationis pignus Baptismo exhibitum fuisse. Quanquam sana interpretatione hîc opus est, ne ex Sacramento (quod sæpe accidit) prava superstitione idolum sibi faciunt homines. Quod Baptismo nos ablui docet Paulus, ideo est, quod illic nobis ablutionem nostram testatur Deus et simul efficit quod figurat. Nisi enim conjuncta esset rei veritas aut exhibitio, quod idem est, impropria hæc loquutio esset, Baptismus est lavacrum animæ. Interea cavendum ne quod unius Dei est, vel ad signum, vel ad ministrum transferatur ; hoc est ut minister censeatur ablutionis author, ut aqua putetur animæ sordis purgare, quod non nisi Christi sanguini convenit. Denique cavendum ne ulla fiduciæ nostræ vel in elemento vel in homine hærat. Quando hîc demum verus ac rectus Sacramenti usus est, recta nos ad Christum manuducere et in ipso sistere. Quod autem aliqui in hoc Baptismi elogio magis extenuendo sudant, ne signo nimium tribuatur, si vocetur animæ lavacrum perperam faciunt. Nam primum Apostolus non docet signum esse quod mundet, sed asserit solius Dei opus. Est ergo Deus qui mundat, nec transferri hoc honoris ad signum fas est, aut signo communicari. Verum signo Deum tanquam, organo uti non est absurdum ; non quia virtus Dei inclusa sit in signo, sed quia nobis eam pro imbecillitatis nostræ captu, tali adminiculo distribuat. * * * * * *In verbo.* Additio minime supervacua, nam verbo sublato, perit tota vis Sacramentorum, quid enim aliud sunt Sacramenta, quam verbi, sigilla ? Atque una hæc consideratio quamlibet superstitionem nobis excutiet. Unde enim sit ut in signis obstupescant superstitiosi nisi quia mentis non advertunt ad Verbum quod eos ad Deum dirigeret ? Calvin in loco.

So also Augustine Tract 80, in John. "Detrahe verbum et quid est aqua nisi aqua." In Bp. Jewell de Sacram. Works, London, 1611.

time effects what he shadows forth. For unless the reality of the thing, or the actual bestowal of it, which is the same, be conjoined, (*namely, as I understand Calvin, with the external washing*), then the assertion that baptism is the washing of the soul would be improper. In the mean time we must take care that what belongs to God alone should not be referred either to the sign or to the minister, that is, the minister should not be considered the author of the washing, nor the water be thought to purge away the filth of the soul, which can only be done by the blood of Christ, and hence we must be careful that no portion of our faith be made to adhere to the element or to the administrator. Only here however, the true and right use of the sacrament is to lead us by the hand aright to Christ, and to graft us in Him. But because some rather toil in attenuating and weakening this (*elogium*) brief sentence of baptism; lest too much regard should be paid to the sign; they represent our asserting it, the washing of the soul, to be rash, inasmuch as the Apostle does not teach that it is the sign which can wash, but asserts it to be solely the work of God; so that it is God that cleanses, nor is it right to attribute this honour either to the sign, or as being communicated in it. But then it is not absurd on the part of God that a sign should be used in the manner of an organ, not because divine influence is included in the sign, but being used on account of our imbecility, by such sensible aid it serves to impart that influence. * *

By the Word. This is not at all an unimportant addition, for the Word being taken away, the whole power of the sacraments perishes, for what are sacraments

other than signs of the word? This single consideration should shake whatever superstition we might cherish. Whence is it that the superstitious dote on signs, unless it is that they address not their minds to that Word which can lead them to God?" κ.τ.λ. Thus the Reformer. But to keep to our line of argument. The Apostle asserts the Church of Christ to be washed and sanctified; that is, in the first place, visibly and ritually by water according to the Jewish sense; but dreading lest men should rest in this sense merely, he teaches that this cleansing is, in the second place, really and immediately effected by the word—the direct medium of the thing signified, which thing is, the grace of the Holy Spirit, and which in infants supplies the need of their infancy,* and in adults works out actual regeneration and positive holiness.

Tit. iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

That *διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας* must be taken to signify Christian baptism, is admitted by almost universal consent. Antiquity is uniform, and nearly so all orthodox modern expositors. Calvin says, "It cannot

* Infants being of the church must be included. So Zanchius in loc. "Fides ideo hic non exprimitur quia de Baptismo loquitur qui etiam parvulis datur." Therefore he does not here mention faith because he speaks of Baptism which is given also to little ones." To say that infants are sanctified, meaning an initial and preparatory sanctification, is only to repeat the Apostle's assertion in I Cor. viii. 14. that "they are ἁγίος holy" that is, as Campbell in his Dissertation on this word shews, holy in the sense of separation to God.

be doubted that he directly alludes to baptism, yea of baptism I may easily allow the passage to be expounded. Not that salvation is included in the external symbol of water, but that it *seals* to us salvation,—our part in Christ.” De Omn. Epis. Pauli. in loc.* Yet apostolic doctrine is still preserved in opposition to former views. Divine mercy saves us, not by the mere *washing* of regeneration, which is external baptism,—but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is the thing signified—the *grace* of regeneration, *ipso facto*, as distinguished from the λουτρον. Then having so received the Holy Ghost, “being justified” simultaneously “by his grace,” we are made “heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” In the present state of the church, except in missionary stations, the former part, the λουτρον, is given in infancy, the full amount of the latter in riper years.

I Peter iii. 21. The like figure (that is the figure of the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark by water) whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ..

To the hallowed and inspired mind of the Apostle, the opening of the windows of heaven (Gen. vii. 11) at

* Read also his concluding remarks on this passage.

“Quamquam signi meminit ut conspicuam nobis Dei gratiam faceret, tamen ne in illo haereamus mox ad Spiritum nos revocat, ut sciamus nos ejus virtute non aqua mundari juxta illud Ezechielis cap 36. 25. Effundam super vos aquas mundas, nempe Spiritum meum. Et certe sic cum Prophetæ verbis, congruunt Pauli verba ut idem ab utroque dici appareat. Quare initio dixi Paulum, quum propriè de Spiritu Sancto agat, simul alludere ad baptismum. Ergo Spiritus Dei est qui nos regenerat, facitque novas creaturas, sed quia invisibilis et occulta est ejus gratiæ visibile in baptismo ejus symbolum conspicitur.”

the time of the deluge, was in the case of the believing patriarch, and as far as he was concerned, the pouring out a blessing. Matt. iii. 10.) The gloomy clouds were to him as the shade of the Schekinah and the descending flood, was at once the divine seal to his faith, and the means, as literally it proved, of his own and his family's salvation. To this external part of the typical deliverance, the water of baptism corresponds; but there was another,—an inward or spiritual part in the transaction referred to. It was that sacred influence from God which rested upon Noah, and which, while it made him to be “moved with fear,” expressed itself in the calmest confidence in his great Deliverer, and led him to wait with patience till the flood should pass away. It was an affiance which clung to the promise of salvation, both when no salvation seemed to be necessary, and when universal destruction appeared. By the side of this, and as corresponding to it, in Christian baptism the Apostle places “the answer of a good conscience towards God.” The phrase ἐπερώτημα is perhaps hardly rendered with exactness by our translators, and in fact in its present connexion it is difficult to render. Hammond regards it as signifying “an enquiry,” also Gerhard, Gomarus, and others. Calvin, *bonæ conscientiæ examen*,* Hooker, with little difference, “an interrogative tryal.† Yet, although critics may differ a little as to the proper rendering, they all are near enough each other to shew the Apostle's meaning. He asserts that baptism saves us, yet, lest any one should fall into the doctrine of

* Poli Synop Critic. in loc. † Eccles. Pol. B. 5, Sec. 63.

Nicodemus, he explains this salvation to consist, not in the putting away the filth of the flesh—not in the removal of outward pollution by the application of water, but in that spiritual influence from the Holy One which first produces gracious fear, as in the case of the penitent jailor, when he said, “what must I do to be saved?” then evangelical faith, as when the Eunuch replied to Philip, in answer to his requirement to believe with all the heart, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God,” and then holy joy, as when both these individuals rejoiced afterwards in the abundance of pardoning mercy. Acts viii. 39, and xvi. 34. A saving influence this, which depended upon the resurrection of Christ, according to New Testament doctrine every where, and which influence in its complete impartation to the believing individual and consequent vocal expression, may very fitly be called “the enquiry,” or the response, of a good, a purified, or pardoned, conscience towards God.

Thus, while John the Baptist, anticipating Christian baptism, and turning men’s attention from the water, laid his stress upon the FIRE, so the Apostle, (though like his Lord he retains the water, yet) makes the spiritual influence the source of salvation. The ark in this passage certainly stands as the type of God’s Church, as that church contains its various divisions of Jew and Gentile, yet the ark was merely an institution for keeping the sacred family together, and in communion and safety ; and in this respect it shadows forth the Church ; and the Tractarian doctrine of the Church being something more than an ark, having an ecclesiastical faith, an incorporate life, that is a life distinct from that of its individual members, may be confidently pronounced a figment of the imagination.

Here may be adduced likewise I John v. 6. "This is he that came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood" conferred with John xix. 34. "And one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and straightway there flowed out blood and water."

These passages are not without their difficulties, but thus much is evident; they teach that Christ came to impart two infinite benefits, pardon and holiness. The pardon exhibited in the emblem of blood, (for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins) and holiness or purity in the emblem of water. And it may be inferred that in imparting these blessings, a like distinctness is observed; personal pardon is through the atonement, represented by blood, and not through literally applied blood, and personal holiness through the Divine Spirit, *represented* by water, and not through actual water. Thus the harmony of New Testament doctrine is every where preserved, and as to the circumstance referred to by the Evangelist, the flowing of blood and water from our Lord's pierced body, it is hard to conceive that it would be mentioned amid such a collocation of awful circumstances, unless it were intended by the Holy Ghost to have a spiritual significance, and that significance the same as is here asserted.* Heb. vi. 1. 2.

* 1. John v. 6. "This is he that came by water and blood, not by water only but by water and blood;" conferred with John xix. 34. "and one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and straightway there flowed out blood and water."

In these words, the Apostle speaks of the revelation of the Messiah, and refers to his baptism and his death as confirmatory of his claim to that office and dignity; to his baptism, for then he received the Messianic sign seen by John the Baptist, John i. 34: the Father put his Spirit upon him, and owned him, which itself was a baptism, though connected with that of

“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

water, Isa. xlii. 1, lxi. 1, and Luke iv. 17, 18: to his death, for nearly all the Old Testament prophets declared that Christ should die. Thus he came, or was revealed as Messiah by water and blood. The design of this, however, did not terminate with our Lord himself, for these two great events served to connect the conjoint symbols of those redeeming benefits which we receive from Christ. Not that at his baptism Christ needed water for himself, but that by “fulfilling all righteousness” he would signify the Father’s righteous appointment of it as a sacramental sign, and not that at His death he needed blood for his own justification, for he was “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,” but that he offered it for the sins of the world, which blood was sacramentally exhibited in the wine of the eucharist, in order to connect that rite with the Jewish passover. When, therefore, there is distinct mention by an inspired apostle of blood and water flowing from the pierced body of our Lord, the circumstance is to be regarded as supernatural and significant, and teaching that Christ’s death atones for the guilt of sin, and (as the water implies or sets forth) removes its pollution. Also that in His redemption, the meaning of the blood and water, so often sprinkled on the vessels of the law, is absorbed. Hammond, Calvin, Beza, and others. And let it be remembered that after water has been once divinely sanctioned as the emblem of evangelic washing, it is not to be taken barely as a general emblem, but whenever the case allows of it, to be interpreted as literal baptism. Professor Keble, in accordance with his views of christian sacraments, says in his *Christian Year on Holy Baptism*,

“What sparkles in that lucid flood,
Is water, by gross mortals eyed;
But seen by faith ’tis blood,
Out of a dear friend’s side.”

This passage is selected not so much to furnish ground for its own sake for any strained or hyper criticism, as to represent an idea which runs more or less through all the Tractist teaching. According to the Professor, the water of baptism represents the atoning blood, and baptism itself is the application. Much allowance is doubtless to be made for what is called poetical license, if the author wished that license to be granted him, but no rhetorical figure can justify the theological error of blending two distinct emblematic references, the

Calvin would include the words "the doctrine of baptisms and imposition of hands" in a parenthesis, and consider the clause as exegetical of the former part of the sentence; that is to say, he understands the Apostle to assert that the doctrine of repentance and faith towards God, is the very doctrine signified in baptism and the imposition of hands.

The plural form of the word baptisms is accounted for by the fact, that the Jews or Hebrews had been acquainted with the ordinance in its varied degrees of signification, namely, the baptism of their own ritual used in the case of proselytes, that of John, which was unto repentance,

one representing the satisfaction made for our sins, the other the gift of the Spirit which is given as the consequence of our pardon. How directly this statement is opposed to the Apostle's declaration "this is he that came by water *and* blood" any one may judge. There is no confusion with the holy Apostles, no blending of pardon with holiness, the sign with the thing signified, one symbol with another, all is clear and consistent. Let baptism be the seal of a covenant engagement entered into between the blessed Trinity and believing men, and it is all dignity, but let it be viewed as this poem views it, and not only is the rite itself debased into a charm, but much is derogated from the doctrine of the atonement, and the application of Christ's blood is no longer a spiritual (but a mechanical or ritual) act.

With regard to the following part of the passage from St. John which we have quoted, "there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood"; as there is, to say the least, *some* doubt of its authenticity, I forbear making it the foundation of any doctrine or argument; at the same time who can doubt, as Doddridge says, but that it contains a great and important truth, which is exhibited throughout the whole tenour of Scripture?

Outward baptism or the water is a witness of the divine authority of the gospel as well as the Lord's Supper, and as well as is the Spirit with his blessed fruits. Its testimony is borne thus; it is a witness of the Saviour's incarnation, and of the fact, that he lived and died upon the earth, for how could it have been imposed upon the thousands of the primitive church if they had never heard of Christ? It is a witness of His divinity, for it was always administered in His name as well as in that of the Father and of the Spirit, shewing that he claimed equal honour and glory with them, and that the claim has been acknowledged by all believers.

that of Christ, which was the seal of belief in his Messiahship, and lastly, Christian baptism, or that which Christ instituted before he ascended. Still, all must be left as first principles. Every thing outward, however divinely instituted, is subordinate to a believing and constant application to the great High Priest in heaven, who seated upon the throne of grace, affords strong consolation to every fugitive and penitent soul who approaches Him. The harmony of Scripture beautifully appears. It was as though the Apostle detected among the professing Hebrews the usual Jewish leaning to place religion in external ordinances, and especially in their most accustomed one of washing or baptism; and thus his desire to lead them rather to that direct spiritual and sanctifying communion with their Lord, which was so abundantly to be realized through being made partakers of the Holy Ghost. And in the tenth chapter of this epistle where the Apostle enlarges upon the typical ritual of the Hebrews, and where it is impossible but that he should advert to the simple ritual of the gospel, even here the universal parallel is drawn, and the grace of the ordinance carefully distinguished from its external sign. Verse 22. "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies sprinkled with pure water; let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." This is not the usual punctuation of the text, but that it is the true one is I think evident from the structure of the argument. According to the Apostle here, as indeed every where, a sprinkled heart,—an inward invisible baptism, is the first and chief requisite, and then as a means of outward profession the washing of the body with pure water.

Thus throughout the Apostolic writings there appears an anxiety (so to speak) lest the doctrine of regeneration should be understood in the Jewish sense, and lest the water should be taken as the washing of the soul, and accordingly in every place where the subject is treated, the opposite views are distinctly and impressively stated. And now in order to complete this part of our argument it only remains to answer the following enquiry. Although our Lord and the Apostles carefully distinguish between the water and the Spirit, the outward sign and the inward grace, yet do they not teach that they are simultaneously given to whomsoever "*obicem non ponentes*" the ordinance is administered? In other words where baptism is truly and properly administered, and received in like manner, is not pardon and regeneration connected therewith? Bishop Pearson's observations on this subject have already been noticed and subjected to comment, but besides this, there are two historical circumstances in the New Testament which seem purposely left on record to guard us against the affirmation of this dogma.

The first is the case of Simon Magus; who is represented as believing, on hearing the preaching of Philip the Evangelist, and as being baptized, and soon after as vilely offering money for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to whom it was then said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God," Acts viii. 21.

This passage is almost decisive as to the fact that in the New Testament, the word believing, is frequently used in the sense of simply receiving and assenting to the general truth of the gospel. Just as when the chief

rulers John xii. 42, were said to believe on Christ, yet would not confess him, and who moreover “loved the praise of men rather than the praise of God”; also as when the devils are said by St. James to believe and yet tremble, c. ii. 19.* In this general sense Simon Magus, and probably the Samaritans believed; they, it is hoped to follow up their general credence in the gospel, by that believing “with the heart unto righteousness,” Romans x. 10, that, believing “with all the heart” Acts viii. 37. which is connected with personal justification, but he, to receive the grace of God in vain, however the measure might be small, and actually to turn it into licentiousness. And when the sacred historian mentions in the same chapter the true and evangelical faith of the eunuch and the mere cold credence of Simon Magus, it is as though he would shew the difference of their faith by the difference of the results that followed, and not only so, but that he would leave obvious and palpable the inference that it is faith *sola* which justifies. Here is a man baptized amongst others by the hands of Philip, and yet declared soon after by Apostolic authority, to be “in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.” The historian even declares, the Holy Ghost at first after their baptism “had fallen upon none of them” and who will undertake authoritatively to limit this declaration, as signifying the miraculous gifts of the Spirit? The Holy Ghost is chiefly

* It is diligently to be noted, that faith is taken in the Scripture two manner of ways. There is one faith which in Scripture is called a dead faith * * Another faith there is in Scripture, * * and this is not only the common belief of the articles of our faith, but it is also a true trust and confidence of the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

Homily on Faith. Ed. 1833, p. 37.

revealed as the Spirit of Adoption and as the Comforter, and it is in this relation that he might not yet have fallen upon them. Upon the whole, if St. Luke had purposely set himself to teach by narration, that baptism is not itself pardon or the new birth, he could hardly have done it more impressively than in this chapter..

The second case is that of Cornelius and his Gentile companions. These men, and especially Cornelius himself, had for some time, as the history shews, been under a gracious preparation for hearing "the word of truth the gospel of salvation," and accordingly, when by a series of extraordinary providences Peter was brought to preach unto them, the word was invested with such power as to be the direct instrument to them of the great salvation. "While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell upon all those which heard the word" Acts ix. 44. And Peter said "can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? Then commanded he them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." 47, 48. In vain the Tracts* endeavour to dispose of this instance by asserting that the Holy Ghost was a miracle wrought for the purpose of inaugurating the Gentile church in the house of Cornelius,—a miracle which looked forward to baptism as its end, and that therefore it must not form a rule to judge by! If a miracle were wrought in this case exactly as at Jerusalem, and as when the Spirit fell at first, and with similar intent, who are to be convinced and impressed by it among the Gentiles? The witnesses of the transaction, except those who were immediately

* No. 67, p. 224.

concerned were "they of the circumcision" and already of the church, members of the elder family!

One of the great authorities of the Tract Divines, Cyril of Jerusalem says, as even they admit, "Yet after the gift of the Spirit, Scripture saith, that Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, that *the soul having been regenerated through their faith*, the body also, by means of the water might share the gift."*

The case is full to the point. Cornelius and his friends were in no other position than any other anxious Gentiles. The Apostle preached pardon and salvation to them, and as to be received by faith, previously to baptism; and now, as the word was immediately attended with its great result,—the purification of these men's hearts by faith, chap. xv. 9—he saw, that from the tenor of the covenant of grace in all ages, and from the tenor of his Lord's commission, they had a right to the covenant sign. That sign, however, was not simultaneous with their pardon. Baptism might increase their grace, but they were born again before. They obtained the blessings of the covenant before that covenant was visibly sealed.

Thus, while in some places the penitent and believing recipient of baptism finds rest to his soul (and he always ought to be taught to expect to find it) in the very ordinance, yet the ordinance itself is not that rest; nor is it in every case, that of partially awakened persons and infants for instance, the very channel of regenerating grace.

* Ibid. Cyril of Jerus. Lect. 3 & 4.

The way to honour God's sacraments is not to represent them as producing their effect *ex opere operato*, as Rome would teach, cursing others for teaching differently, but rather as connected with penitent and pleading prayer, as seen in Paul, and hearty and humble faith, as in the case of the Eunuch and the Jailer at Phillippi. It is with these sacred exercises of the heart, that God, in communing with men, connects the blessings of his outward and visible institutions. In the days of Moses, the dying Israelites looked upon the brazen serpent in order to be healed; but it was not the symbol which instrumentally healed them; it was the believing look. The brazen sign, besides typifying One who should be afterwards lifted up, only served to embody the Divine promise; and when that sign in after years became an object of faith, instead of an aid to it, it was destroyed. The way to revere the ordinances is submissively to regard them as of Divine institution, irrespective of any known benefits that they may bring, and thus offer the tribute of mingled awe and love. And let it not be said we depreciate sacraments to exalt faith. Sacraments are least depreciated when least removed from the position in which the All-wise God has placed them. With regard to faith, of which Tractarian doctrine makes so little, at least so far as it signifies anything more than cold assent to the articles of the Creed; with regard, I say, to true evangelical faith, I cannot understand the Scriptures, if they do not represent the production of this faculty in the heart and mind of free human beings, as requiring all the treasures of Divine wisdom and love. The incarnation of the Son, the gift of the Spirit, the record of Scripture, the ministry of the Word, the

arrangements of Providence, and the Sacraments themselves, seem all intended to call forth and to perpetuate that cry from the guilty and hardened heart of our race, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief,"—a cry which brings the Saviour down, makes up the long and weary breach produced by sin, and commences an intercommunion, produced by desire on the one part and impartation on the other, which deepens in vitality to all eternity.

Yours, dear Sir, as ever,

LETTER VII.

Baptism.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHEN we leave the age of inspiration, and part company with the blessed apostles, we immediately find ourselves surrounded by writers of a very different order. The solemnity, the depth, the terseness, the fulness, the unction, the heavenly wisdom of Scripture is all gone, indicative of the fact that the Holy Ghost has drawn a strong and indelible line of distinction between his own writings and the writings of men. And not only so, but as it respects the subject before us, the distinction which we have traced all the way through the New Testament between the λουτρον, the laver of regeneration, and the grace of regeneration, likewise disappears. It may be conceded to the Tractarian writers, that by "regeneration" the fathers of antiquity usually meant baptism, and used the terms interchangeably. According to their rhetorical and loose style, baptism, regeneration, illumination, sanctification, consecration, were all correlative terms. The disappearance of the New Testament distinction, and the confounding external baptism with the birth *ανωθεν* from above, may be referred to two causes. Many of the fathers and their teachers were either brought up at the famous school of Alexandria, or under its influence, and as this

was the principal seat of the Judæo Hellenistic philosophy, its scholars would naturally be imbued with strong Jewish leanings,—those leanings which the apostles in their days were continually endeavouring to destroy, as is evident from their exhortations and epistles. On no subject would the disciples of this school be more liable to indulge their prejudice than on that of baptism, for this ordinance was the only portion of the Jewish ritual (if we except the paschal supper), which our Lord allowed to be retained. So that if baptism was called regeneration before the kingdom of Christ began, unless deep spiritual and Christian views prevented it, the same would be called regeneration after, as we find is actually the case.

A second cause is the fact, that in the primitive age most of the baptisms by far were those of penitent and believing adults, who were convinced of sin under the ministry of the word; and therefore the reception of baptism on their part being the expression of their contrition and faith, God graciously accompanied it with the signified blessing on His part, giving them the seal of the “Holy Spirit of promise.” So it appears to have been with Cyprian* and others. The first of the uninspired fathers, or those called by way of distinction *apostolical*, say little or nothing on the subject; but by

* He seems to record a remarkable influence of divine grace, as having accompanied his baptism. It is reasonable to suppose that this was commonly the case at that time. The inward and spiritual grace really attended the outward and visible sign, and it is to be lamented that the corruption and perversion of after ages availing itself of the ambiguous language of the Fathers on this subject, which with them was natural enough, supposed a necessary conjunction to take place when there had been a frequent one.

Milner's Eccles. Hist. Cent. 3rd. Cyprian.

degrees, that regeneration, or new birth, which was truly predicated of believing penitents, and recipients of the Holy Ghost, rescued from heathenism, became predicated of all persons whatsoever, including infant children; and thus the doctrine, aided by influential schools, became universal.

To cite those passages of the fathers which refer to baptism, and which prove that they identified regeneration with it, were a needless task, and is beyond my design. All this may safely be conceded to our opponents, for it is not to be contradicted. But, as the fathers had ceased to make use of the distinction of the Scriptures before referred to, their views of regeneration had necessarily to be explained so as to accord with the actual moral and spiritual state of the persons baptized. It is therefore of importance to know what was their exposition of the doctrine of regeneration, or what they usually meant by the word. Accordingly we shall find the following ideas developed:—

1st. That it implied the conventional sanctification of professed discipleship,—that is, the visible separation of Christians from the world, and their consecration to God, as his property. So Irenæus: “Omnes enim venit per semet ipsum salvare: omnes inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum; infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem: et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes: in parvulis parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes ætatem; simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus, et justitiæ et subjectionis: in juvenibus juvenis,” &c. “For he came to save all persons by himself; all, I mean, who by Him are *regenerated* into God, infants

and little ones, and children and youths, and elder persons. Therefore he went through the several ages: for infants being made an infant, *sanctifying* infants: to little ones he was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age; and also giving them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness: to youths He was a youth," &c.—Adv. Hæreses, lib. ii. c. 39.

St. Jerome too, eulogizing virginity, says that Christ "natus ex virgine renatus per virginem."—Cont. Jovin. lib. i. "Christ being born of a virgin, was born again or regenerated through a virgin," meaning John the Baptist. Dr. Wall admits that, taking the word for conversion, repentance, &c. (and we may add, for any gracious or purifying influence whatever), this would be to make the father utter an impious speech.* If our spotless Lord were regenerated, according to patristic ideas,—how could it imply a purifying or spiritual blessing? So Clemens Alexandrinus, in reference to the same transaction, our Lord's baptism, says, "Σήμερον ἀναγεννηθεὶς ὁ χριστὸς ἤδη τέλειός ἐστιν; ἢ ὅπερ ατοπώτατον ἐλλινής." "Was Christ, as soon as he was regenerated, perfect? or will they be so absurd as to say, he still wanted any thing?" &c. "Ἀμα τοίνυν τῷ βαπτιζέσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰωάννου γίνεται τέλειος." "As soon as baptized by John, he is perfect."—Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. i. c. 6. According to these writers, as our Lord's regeneration consisted in his being ritually separated to the work which the Father gave him to do, so ours must consist in our ritual consecration to his service. The regeneration mentioned by our Lord, Matt. xix. 28, is fixed

* Hist. Inf. Bap. P. 1. p. 78.

by the context as signifying the final renovation of all things, and when the passage is properly pointed conveys the following sense:—"Ye which have followed me, shall in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

2nd. A second idea which the ancients had respecting regeneration was, that it washed away the guilt of original transgression, by which they meant that it removed the judicial liabilities inflicted on account thereof. It did not take away the moral taint. Dr. Wall says "that the Greek writers though they own this (our) natural corruption, yet do not generally by the property of their language call it by the name of sin, but they express it by the name *natural defilement*, pollution, disease, and the like, that which the Latins call *original sin*. The word *ἁμαρτία* and especially *ἁμαρτήματα* do properly with them signify an actual sin or transgression." Hence they deny that infants have *ἁμαρτίας* or *ἁμαρτήματα* and yet state that baptism washes off that pollution *ρύπον* which is transmitted on human nature by the sin of Adam,* and thus in this way they connect these infants with regeneration, adoption, and admission into Christ's kingdom.† But the Greek view of infant regeneration is the removal of liability to punishment, and of those natural disabilities which hinder our entrance into the kingdom of God.

And with regard to the Latin view in this case, the fathers express themselves much in a like manner. Tertullian's first words are "Felix sacramentum aquæ

* Isidore Pelus. Lib. 3. ep. 195. ap. Wall p. 1. p. 235. † Ibid.

nostræ, quâ abluti delictis pristinæ cæcitatîs, in vitam æternam liberamur!" "Blessed sacrament of our water, by which, washed from the faults of our original blindness, we are liberated into life eternal."* And a little further on, to show that in his mind regeneration meant rather a change in the relation of our persons than a renewed and hallowed state of our hearts, he mentions Christian baptism in conjunction with the practice of a similar application of water by heathen nations. "Id que se in regenerationem et impunitatem perjuratorum suorum agere præsumunt." "And they say they do this for their regeneration, and for immunity from their former perjuries."† And so far is this father from regarding baptism as the impartation of a pure and holy nature, that the sixteenth section of his treatise is employed in exhorting to put off the ordinance as long as may possibly be done with safety, on account of the sins that may be committed in the mean time, and which, if he believed in its power to hallow the inward nature, might not have been committed. Thus far Tertullian, who does not give, however, perfect satisfaction to his friends, but is deemed somewhat incoherent and fanciful.‡ It is certain, too, that he eventually became heretical. If, however, Tertullian was rhapsodical and heretical, other fathers may be so too, and hence their authority is shaken, and the preciousness of self-explained Scripture on the other hand made manifest.

* Tert. De Bapt. Works, Fol. 224. A.

† Ibid. c. 5.

‡ Let those who wish to have a glimpse of the strange conceits of this father reflect upon the following passage which occurs at the commencement of his tract on baptism. Sed nos pisciculi secundum *ἡθὺς* nostrum Jesum Christum in aqua nascimur, nec aliter quam in aqua permanendo salui sumus.

St. Augustine, however, a greater authority, says, "And as in that thief's case, what was wanting of the sacrament of baptism the mercy of the Almighty made up; because it was not out of pride or contempt, but of necessity that it was wanting: so in infants that die after they are baptized, it is to be believed that the same grace of the Almighty does make up that defect, that by reason, not of a wicked will, but of want of age, they can neither believe with the heart unto righteousness, nor confess with the mouth unto salvation. So that when others answer for them, that they may have this sacrament given them, it is valid for their consecration, because they cannot answer for themselves: but if for one that is able to answer himself another should answer, it would not be valid.—By all which it appears, that the *sacrament of baptism is one thing*, and (conversionem cordis) *the conversion of the heart another*: but that the salvation of a person is completed by both of them. Aug. Contra. Don. ap. Wall P. 2, p. 256. And so in other places. It is abundantly evident, that in addition to the former view, regeneration was regarded as the removal of our liability to punishment for the original fault and corruption of human nature, and not that new nature which is described in the Scriptures as triumphing over it. Indeed one of them, as we see, plainly states, that the sacrament of baptism, or as they understood it, regeneration, is one thing, and the conversion of the heart another. If conversion of the heart after baptism be needed, then their regeneration cannot be regarded as in itself effecting much, and on this single point they take common ground with the most enthusiastic Methodist that ever lived.

And 3rd. Although they deny the regeneration of baptism to be the "conversion of the heart," yet another

idea superadded to the two former is, that there is a seed of grace implanted therein, which grows and fructifies in the case of infants in after years, or, to use the words of Augustine, in another figure, "which is in them as a spark raked up which will kindle as they grow in years."

Aug. ad Dardanus, s. 17. In another place he asserts them to be benefited by the faith of those who present them for baptism. Nearly all say that there is no other regeneration, though it is not denied that after relapse into sin; pardon, peace, and holiness, may possibly be found by all persons who approach the throne of grace in humility and faith.

And yet all these ideas; relative consecration, freedom from original guilt, and an initial spark of grace, do not, together, come up to the regeneration of the Scriptures, because that blessing invariably implies deliverance from the power of sin, and that happy and active obedience to the divine commands which flows from a holy and filial state of heart.

None can deny that the infants of christian parents may receive the benefits just specified, without denying the plainest inferences of Scripture, and neglecting to observe that gracious constitution under which infants are born; but to call these benefits, in their collected character, regeneration, is to set aside the plain scriptural marks of that blessing, and to force the called individual into the heavenly banquet room without ascertaining whether or not he has the wedding garment on. And even if the common illustration of this subject be adduced, namely, that of natural birth, there is the seed of embryo life imparted by God, considerably before the time when awakening into active existence takes place.

From antiquity we now turn to the Church of England, with which we in this country, whether we are theoretic dissenters or not, are more immediately placed in contact.

It cannot be concluded from the Article on Baptism, if we examine nothing more than that document, that the Church regards spiritual regeneration as concomitant with this sacrament, whatever may be the case with portions of the Liturgy.

The Article terms baptism a *sign* of such regeneration, "whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive it *rightly* are grafted into the Church; the *promises* of forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed. Faith is confirmed and grace increased *by virtue of prayer to God.*" No necessary connexion is here at all indicated. But when we turn to the office for the public ministration of the ordinance, prayer is offered to God that He would wash and sanctify the child "with the Holy Ghost," that he may receive "remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration," that he may enjoy the benediction of God's heavenly washing." The prayer again proceeds, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant that he may be born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation," and those other supplications follow which have reference to the spiritual state of the child in future days. Now if all these supplications were offered by a believing minister and a believing congregation in the spirit of holy and fervent desire, and in the name of Christ, it would not be too much to say that the answer might be given, for the Saviour appeals to even our imperfect paternal love to shew the willingness of God to bestow the Holy Spirit on them that ask Him. The Office

however assumes that in every case prayer is thus offered, and does thus prevail; for in the thanksgiving and its declaratory introduction, it continues, "Seeing now dearly beloved brethren that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto God for these benefits;"—"We yield thee hearty thanks most merciful Father that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thy own child by adoption, and to incorporate him with thy holy church," and also in the office of confirmation which rite succeeds baptism, God is thanked, that previously in baptism, he has renewed the recipient and forgiven him all his sins. From this it appears that the Liturgy explained candidly and fairly, uses the word regeneration, not only as signifying introduction to the visible church, but as involving justification and adoption, that is to say it uses the word in all its scriptural extent of meaning.

With the exception of putting pardon or remission of sins as the second blessing in order, and making it the proximate effect rather than the proximate cause of regeneration, this part of the Liturgy appears scripturally correct and coherent in its structure; and when truly expressive of actual and spiritual exercises of mind, is a true medium of drawing near to God, taking hold of his strength, and making peace with Him. But it pleads for the spiritual regeneration of the child, and assumes that it is granted; it assumes the covenant faithfulness of the baptized child as a penitent believer, and in the office of confirmation re-asserts his sins forgiven; it assumes the Christian faithfulness and obedience unto death of the confirmed individual, and hence

commits his body to the grave "in the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We do not so much assert doctrinal error in the premises from which these conclusions are drawn, the error and danger of the Anglican system is a practical one. All may be explained as consistent and complete, if the words are at the same time a true indication of what is passing in the soul, and if the covenant conditions upon which every blessing is suspended are complied with; but if not, who can assert that the pardon and regeneration predicated in the case exist elsewhere than on the paper?

It may be urged that as far as baptism is concerned there is nothing on the part of the child to hinder whatever efficacy God is pleased to annex to it, but granting that in this ordinance there is universally a blessing, the question returns is that blessing the regeneration of the Scriptures? An affirmative answer to which is sought for in vain.

It may be represented again that regeneration in an infant is or may be very different in its manifestations from the same blessing in an adult, yet still, as there is no positive doctrine respecting the nature of the blessing given in baptism, we have no right with only adult cases of regeneration before us in the Scriptures to regard that infant blessing as regeneration, especially as it would have the responsible and momentous effect of preventing the recipient from seeking that baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, in which consists his actual renovation. Resting in the fact that he has been regenerated once, all those Scriptures which so solemnly enjoin the renewal of the soul after the image of Christ,

—the putting on the new man—the being in Christ are in such a case nothing to him, he has no concern with them. The new birth as Scripture speaks of it is a change which affects and runs through all the active powers of the soul. But in baptized infants there are usually no active powers. The will and the affections exist in an undeveloped state, in which state it is difficult to conceive of their existence at all, though we have reason to believe that in the early death of infants and their awaking into immortality, that the recovered image of God in them, rises into all its lineaments, and the soul breaks forth into complacential delight. Yet we have no right I repeat, to take a doctrine of Scripture from adult cases, and apply it by the aid of a metaphysical refinement to the case of infants on earth, where several of the former and scriptural premises are wanting. Augustine found that to connect *his* (which was in fact patristic) regeneration with all its scriptural concomitants, was so fraught with inconvenience and difficulty, that he adopted the distinction of elect infants, from the general mass of those who were baptized, asserting that they persevered in grace and gained heaven, while the rest fell away, thus adopting one baseless theory to serve the weakness of another.

Original sin does exist in infants, and it must be washed away. If they die in infancy this washing is effected by the Spirit's application of the atoning blood and his own sanctifying energy pledged in baptism, and if they live it is removed at the same time with the blotting out of their actual transgressions, which is the justification of their persons, and if they are never justified from actual transgression it is never removed.

But to assert the new birth to be effected solely and simultaneously with the application of water by episcopal administrators, irrespective of the moral character or the spiritual apathy of the responsible parties, is to have here before us the Romanist doctrine on the subject. There is no *via media* here, however the Tracts may attempt to explore such a path; sacraments are either those "moral instruments of salvation," which Hooker speaks of, or else they are charms. A sacrament in any case has the import of being a sign and seal of God's love, but no authority short of a plain precept of, or direct inference from Scripture can make it an absolute channel of the Spirit's power. Infant children may properly be taken more as *objects* of grace than *subjects* of it, while, as far as we know, they have no desires or affections in action.

God, as a covenant God, and as engaging to supply all the real need of Abraham and his spiritual seed, may impart a blessing in baptism, in connexion with his act of declaring at the very time "I am thy God";—but it is a blessing of initial grace, given as the universal result of the Saviour's death, which prepares them for seeking spiritual regeneration when personal responsibility shall arrive,—a seed which includes the real new birth, in no other sense than an unplanted seed may loosely be said to include the living flower. Dr. Pusey is so anxious to exalt his favourite theme, that when in Tract 67, speaking of conversion, faith, and holiness, he asserts that regeneration is different from all these, and greater than all, because it includes them all, he sacrifices a sober judgment to a Romanized imagination. He might as well say, that regeneration is a greater

blessing than heaven or eternal glory—for glory is as much inchoated in gospel grace, as the advancing stages of the christian life on earth are involved and inchoated in the baptismal blessing.

From what has been said above then, it is evident that the Liturgy at least of the Church of England stands committed to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, though evangelical divines have often laboured to shew that it will admit of another exposition. But when the High Church commentators and expositors have defended the doctrine of the Prayer Book on this point, they have fled for authority and precedent to the practice of the Jews and of the Fathers, both as it regards baptism itself, and the manner in which it is spoken of; whereas as we have seen, both the Jews and the Fathers differed from our Lord and his apostles; attributing, in their common way of speaking, that result to *one* thing, which in Scripture is always carefully ascribed to two. These church authors likewise in their comment adopt the same views of regeneration as were held in antiquity,* and when they are driven to explain

So Wheatley on Common Prayer, London, 1729, p. 338, s. 2.

“Nor can anything better represent regeneration or the new birth, which our Saviour requires of us before we can become christians, than washing with water. For as that is the first office done unto us after our natural births, in order to cleanse us from the pollutions of the womb; so when we are admitted into the church we are first baptized (whereby the Holy Ghost cleanses us from the pollutions of our sins and renews us unto God,) and so becomes as it were spiritual infants, and enter into a new life and being which before we had not. For this reason, when the Jews baptized any of their proselytes, they called it their New Birth, Regeneration or being born again.”

Again. Herbert Thorndike, who you know is a great authority with our Tractists, says: “If we conceive the regeneration of infants that are baptized to consist in the habitual assistance of God’s Spirit, the effects whereof are to

what they mean by *their* regeneration as it exists in baptized infants, they are usually found to understand nothing more than that initial grace, that seed of life, which the Methodist at least as devoutly believes in as they. This circumstance would seem at first sight to bring them nearer to their nonconforming brethren than they consider themselves to be, were it not that the holding of baptismal regeneration in the High Church school precludes the absolute necessity of any subsequent change or renovation of heart, and thus the disciples of this school, and especially those who call themselves Anglo-Catholic, are driven to low and unscriptural views of the concomitants of regeneration, which are pardon and holiness, in order to suit the lowness of their regeneration itself. The fearful consequence of this is to drive vital holiness, and a religion of love and peace out of the world.

appear in making them all perform that which their Christianity requires at their hands as soon as they shall understand themselves to be obliged by it, we give reason enough of the effect of their baptism whether they die or live, and yet become not liable to any inconvenience. For supposing the assistance of God's Spirit, assigned them by promise of baptism, to take effect when their bodily instruments enable the soul to act as Christianity requireth, if the soul come by death to be discharged of them, can any thing be said why original concupiscence, which is the law of the members, should remain any more to impeach the subjection of the faculties to the law of God's Spirit?

All this is true; but so far from substantiating baptismal regeneration, making thereby no subsequent change of heart necessary, it is rather pleading with us for a preparative blessing in baptism anticipative of regeneration in years to come. Again; the writer in the *Tract Catena Patrum*, No. 2. Vol. 3, in asserting infantile baptismal regeneration, regards it as an open and subordinate question between orthodox divines, "Whether baptism, strictly speaking, conveys the blessings annexed to it, or simply admits into a state gifted with those blessings, as being the initiatory rite of the covenant of mercy." This passage is chargeable with the same consequences as the former.

In now approaching, as is high time, the close of this letter, I may observe that Methodism is too important a feature in the religious history of the last century, and Mr. Wesley too important an actor in it, even in matters affecting this controversy, that they should be overlooked. The Methodist Service Book is compiled from the Liturgy of the Church, but in the office for baptism, those passages are omitted which assert the spiritual and simultaneous regeneration of the recipient. This is charged upon Mr. Wesley and the Methodists as inconsistency, on the part of those who find it convenient to taunt them with regard to their professed attachment to the Church.

Mr. Wesley evinced his attachment to the church, not only by being slow and reluctant in departing when a higher law called him, from her established order; but also by receiving her teaching, and adopting the very expressions in which that teaching is embodied. Thus in different places of his writings he admits, sometimes in the way of an *argumentum ad hominem*, and sometimes in the way of direct recognition, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; as for instance in his father's "Treatise on Baptism," reprinted in Vol. 10, p. 192, of his works, and in his sermon on the New Birth, Vol. 6, p. 74.

At the same time if a candid man wished to become thoroughly acquainted with Mr. Wesley's views on the all important subject of the regeneration of sinful human nature, he cannot stop here. He is bound to examine and compare the whole of his doctrinal works.

To go no farther than the passages in question there are guarding clauses which go very far to modify the

Ultra High Church interpretation on the subject. Thus in the passage in the Treatise, the blessing connected with baptism is explained to be "a principle of life," *i. e.* simply a principle, without saying a word about its strength and power. And in the sermon, he denies in the case of adult baptism, the invariable and simultaneous connexion of the sign with the thing signified, distinguishing between being "born of water" and being "born of the Spirit;" and in the case of infant's baptism, represents the Church as *supposing*, not asserting the simultaneous regeneration of the recipients. This clause then would reduce the matter to a supposition rather than to a doctrine. Again, in the same Treatise he says, "Baptism doth now save us if we live answerable thereto," "if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel. Supposing this as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter;" an admission this, which represents the general efficacy of baptism as conditionally dependant upon repentance, faith, and walking according to the gospel; conditions which cannot be fulfilled by infants till they come to riper years. Such are the guards which he throws around the lessons of the Church. But what are Mr. Wesley's views of regeneration itself? We find him treat of a blessing of nobler character, and richer fulness;—a blessing which is distinct from this of baptism, and does not grow out of it, except that so far as all grace diligently improved is the root of greater grace, and as all grace is received under the same evangelical covenant.

The entire scope and tenor of his sermon on the New Birth is to shew that the regeneration of the Scriptures implies such a new nature as has power over active and

actual sin, and such as prompts us to the continual service of God under the strong influence of grateful, holy, and filial affections ; and in the sermon on “ The privilege of those that are born of God,” it is represented in like manner.

In the Apostle’s order, regeneration follows pardon, though there is no interval of time between, and this order Mr. Wesley clearly and fully acknowledges in his sermon on God’s Vineyard, vol. vii, p. 205, in these words ; “ Who then is a Christian according to the light which God hath vouchsafed his people ? He that being justified by faith hath peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time is “ born again,” “ born from above,” “ born of the Spirit,” inwardly changed from the image of the devil to that image of God wherein he was created.”

From the whole of this it may confidently be concluded, that although Mr. Wesley acknowledges a blessing in baptism ; even in infant baptism, and used the language of the Church in describing it, yet he carefully distinguished it from that great salvation from the guilt and power of sin, which the scriptures call regeneration, either as they use that exact word or its collateral phrases. It was on this account that he left out of the Methodist Service Book, when forming it as an abridgment of the Church Liturgy, those particular expressions which assert unqualified baptismal regeneration, and which expressions might only tend to perplex and agitate the minds of those, who, to say the least, were less committed to the Liturgy as a whole than he was himself. He regarded baptism as the λουτρον—the bath or washing of regeneration, the outward sign, attended with such

degrees of grace as the recipient could at the time receive, according to his maturity of nature, and compliance with the terms of the evangelical covenant: but the spiritual blessing just described he alone regarded as "the renewing of the Holy Ghost,"—the inward part of regeneration. Hence Mr. Wesley, as is well known, preached regeneration as zealously and fervently to those ungodly individuals who had been baptized at the Church in infancy, as he did to any other sinners whatever. From these views the Methodists as a body have not departed. They acknowledge a blessing in baptism, derived from its institution by Christ, and from the fact of its being connected with His intercession and the prayers of saints, and from its being the standing seal of the Father's ancient and unalterable covenant of redeeming mercy; but they acknowledge that alone to be the true scriptural regeneration, which is connected with power over sin, and with filial affections, and is concomitant with the justification of our persons. And thus they use the Service Book, and sing the very impressive and devout baptismal hymns of Charles Wesley.

The Church of England, when interpreted by such as Wheatley and the modern Tractarian,* is thrown as far as practice is concerned into a position utterly inconsistent with herself and Scripture. She adopts the conventional sense of the new birth, builds its universality on the patristic view—a low, deficient view—and then

* That "life" of which the Tracts speak, which by our negligence "may afterwards decay, or be choked, or smothered, or well nigh extinguished, and by God's mercy may again be renewed and refreshed" No. 67, does not appear to imply any more real vitality than is recognized by the 10th Article as connected with that "grace of God by Christ preventing us that we may have a good will and working with us when we have that good will."

having so builded it, takes this regeneration and adds all its scripture concomitants, as though it were perfectly scriptural itself,—a process, which, if applied to any other subject, her own children would denounce as most illogical. We are again, then, and finally, brought to our conclusion,—the conclusion of all Christians who hold the great doctrines of the Reformation,—that in adult baptism the outward sign and the inward grace are not always concomitant, and that the blessing which infants receive when they are devoutly baptized is not regeneration, but is rather intended to lead to true regeneration in after life, if they live, the Holy Spirit, through the intercession of Christ, finishing His work in them if they die.*

In the sacrament of baptism, the water or outward

* See Watson's Works Vol. 3, p. 72, 80.

The question will probably occur here what becomes of the infants of the heathen who die in infancy and who are not baptized? It is freely granted that they are saved from the consequences of Adam's transgression, through the merits of the second Adam, and in the order of that gracious constitution which he has raised for the recovery of the world. But into what degrees of positive blessing? There is a difference between that constitution of grace under which the whole world is placed (in which many transactions of wisdom and goodness take place beside the salvation of heathen infants) and that covenant which is made to Abraham's spiritual seed—the church. This church is distinguished by peculiar privileges, there is a special presence of God manifested unto it, which is different from God's general omnipresence. All children are born under Christ's merciful constitution, but all are not born within the encircling clauses of that gracious engagement which refers to the christian church, this is the privilege rather of christian infants. Whether there will be a difference in the allotment of eternity between the children of the church and other children none can tell. The latter enter the Holy of Holies by another way than the first sanctuary. However Christ may judge the heathen without baptism, he requires us to observe baptism, and if in the case of any of our infants it should be unavoidably omitted, he will not, in case of their removal hence, withhold his blessing, because circumstances tended to deprive it of the ordinance.

sign is from earth, the inward grace is from heaven, indicating the sacred connexion, which redemption secures, between both worlds—between fallen humanity, represented in the person of the first Adam, and Him who is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Yet, evangelical doctrine acknowledges a distinction and difference of operation between Christ appointing a sign, the token of membership with his mystic body, and the impartation of life to that sign by the Holy Ghost, who glorifies Him by receiving of the things that are His, and imparting them to us. This distinction Anglo-Catholicism merges. Like Romanism, it beholds the sign, and infers the life, whether the soul live or not; an error which runs through the whole of the corrupt Popish Church, and leaves her “dead while she liveth.” But the true believer uses the sign in order to seek the life, believing that although the Spirit “bloweth where He listeth,” in the closet, or the sanctuary, or by the family altar, or wherever prayer and penitence are found; yet he delights especially to breathe His influence, as the Lord and Giver of Life, in connexion with the Saviour’s tokens, and to cause men there to hear “the sound thereof.” A helpless babe, through the wickedness or apathy of its parents, might be deprived of baptism, and die, and suffer no loss; the Saviour would not deny the Spirit, because they scorned the water, and yet those parents would not thereby pass unjudged. A spiritual mystic might sincerely put off the sign with the mistaken intent of first securing the blessing which it signified; and in some cases the sign might be omitted rather in ignorance of its import than in contempt; and yet, God might in infinite compassion

deal mildly with those instances. Yet it by no means follows that such builders on the foundation shall suffer no loss, and still less that the contemptuous despiser shall go unpunished. The irreverent and the unauthorized administrator both commit a sin, the one against Christian order, the other against Christ; yet it were better, in a case of necessity, as, for instance, that of a dying babe at sea, where no minister could be had, that a layman, yea, or a woman, should take water and pour it on the sufferer, repeating the words of the sacred form, than that such a one should leave the world without the usual witness that for him the Saviour lived and died. And yet, finally, in the ordinary course, for an infant baptism to take place without assurance being given on the part of parents or others that the child shall be brought up in the ordinances, and under the teaching of the regenerating Word, this is only to mock an institution which binds all the parties concerned to as solemn and active obligations as can possibly be discharged by human beings.

In such a course the ordinance cannot be legitimately administered to other than the children of believing parents, or at the least, of parents who are prepared to give *in propria personâ*, or by their representatives, a solemn pledge that the children so baptized shall be brought up in Christian ordinances. For, admitting the covenant character of the rite, how almost certain it is, that in the case of a neglected or vicious training, or of the practical heathenism of the parents, the good seed will be choked, and the implied spiritual engagements violated. Baptism, in the certain prospect of such a case, is almost an injustice.

It is contracting obligations which the child has not the remotest likelihood of fulfilling. It would be solemn mockery: a little one is presented to the church, as though the intention was to have it placed under culture for eternal life, when, lo! it is deprived of Christian teaching, of public worship, and by consequence, of the least share of that divine unction which in the church flows from the head of our great High Priest down to skirts of his garment, even to his least and weakest members. So fully are baptism, and parental, and pastoral care connected together.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Baptism.

MY DEAR SIR,

So far as baptized infants are concerned, and while they are infants, and incapable of voluntary transgression, they are to be regarded as fully entitled to as much of the grace of the gospel covenant as they are capable of receiving. How much positive and spiritual blessing it may imply we know not; but certainly if those infants die, it is the seal and visible security of the resurrection in glory of their bodies, and of eternal life as regards their whole persons.

It is when the period of individual responsibility arrives, and the law of God is brought to bear upon the conscience of the individual, that the doctrine of scripture respecting a sinner's justification is seen in all its practical and paramount importance; for as has been observed before, the scriptures speak to those and those only who are individually responsible and capable of moral actions. Admitting it to be true that every child in baptism (as Dr. Pusey somewhere says) receives "pardon full and free," it could only continue true so long as the fruits of pardon were found. As long as infancy lasts, there can be no visible fruits; by reason of the undeveloped state of the moral faculties, but after infancy the case is

altered, and the Scripture requires the undivided "fruit of the Spirit" in greater or less degrees of manifestation, in order to test the presence of the Spirit. The blessing of pardon must, under all circumstances, be a blessing of fixed and unalterable character, and attended by the same concomitant privileges. If, therefore, the baptized child, shall, with the first emotions and acts of individual responsibility, deplore before the Lord the sin of his nature, (for even if it be pardoned the necessity is not done away of deploring it) and shall humbly and entirely rely on the sacrifice of Christ as the divinely appointed means of continually realizing that benefit, if, to use St. Paul's criterion, he shall find access by faith into the grace in which believers stand, and as his years roll over, having tribulation working patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope making not ashamed because of the love of God which is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.—privileges these not to be separated from justification, then, beyond a doubt, the great foundation blessing is in full force still,—the gift of a covenant God. At the same time, if there were no doubt that it was originally given in baptism, it is continually maintained *only* through faith, that is a penitent faith which confides in the atonement of Christ. But how will the thousands of baptized youth in our country, yea, of those who have been baptized at church, bear the application of this doctrine to their case?

That there may have been occasional instances like that just supposed, is not denied, and their occurrence proves the infinity of the Saviour's grace, without disproving the doctrine of justification by faith alone. But

do we, my dear sir, find evidence that one baptized child in a thousand is possessed of that "angelic nature" which the Oxford school somewhere supposes to be conferred in the initial ordinance? Is there a gracious act of faith humbly and penitently exercised with the first thoughts of responsible childhood, in the blood of Christ? the doctrine of the atonement at the same time, according to Tractarian principles, being kept back or reserved! Is there complacency in God? Is His love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to them? Is there in their tempers and lives the undivided "fruit" mentioned in the epistle to the Galatians, v. 22? Is there not in the vast majority petulant, vain, or otherwise evil passions, filial disobedience, and a preference of worldly vanities to spiritual exercises and the service of God? And in a great number of cases, do we not find the more gross and palpable acts of transgression against the divine law, the manifestations of that carnal mind which increases in carnality with advancing years?

If none are certainly justified, but such as have kept their baptismal covenant unbroken from their infancy, then how many in the pale of Christ's Church are in this state? If the majority of baptized children have lost the blessing, (assuming it to be true that in baptism they received it), does the Scripture address all such, that is to say, all except the heathen and the unbaptized, in terms of doubt and despondency on the question of obtaining the divine favour, in the case of their becoming penitent? Does not the Tractist doctrine of the doubtfulness of pardon after baptism tend to drive the awakened conscience to despair; and if men are not driven to despair by it, is it not because they are not awakened?

How totally and palpably is all this opposed to the plain teaching of the Apostle Paul! His doctrine appeals to the sinning and guilty Jew, who, like his father Abraham, had received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness which is by faith, the corresponding privilege to which sign is Christian baptism; to the Jew, I say, who had gone from the covenant of his God; and directs his guilty soul, as well as that of the heathen Gentile, to the "righteousness of God, revealed from faith to faith." Rom. i. 17. This way of faith in Christ's blood is continually pointed out direct in the Scriptures of the New Testament, as well as by symbol and by implication in the Old. The Bible throughout has only one reply to the solemn inquiry "What must I do to be saved?" The promise of justification is made to a world of sinners as sinners, to the far off and the near, whether baptized or otherwise; and lest there should be the least doubt on this supremely important subject, it is expressed in all its solemnity and universality in the close of Scripture, from the words of which none may take any thing away; "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely." Revelations xxii. 17. The Church, who is the Bride, must be as comprehensive and inviting in her summons as the Spirit. It is very possible for even Tractist divines to preach justification by faith in a certain way, and by actually doing so, they have often deluded many. *Their* justification, however, is not like that of Saint Paul—the justification of the ungodly; but rather the continued acceptance and justification of those who were justified

according to their views in baptism. *Their* faith, too, is not penitent trust, but the simple and cold reception of the Church's Creed. It is the end and aim of evangelical doctrine to keep this way to the heavenly kingdom clear and open. It glorifies Christ by taking the penitent soul out of his guilt and bondage, and by casting him upon His infinite mercies; and renders equal honour to the Holy Ghost, whose office it is, as Bishop Pearson says, "to assure us of the adoption of sons, to create in us a sense of the paternal love to God towards us, to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance.*"

When we consider what must have been the astonishment of the Reformers at perceiving the vast difference both in spirit and tendency, between the doctrine of sacramental justification as held by Rome, and that of justification by faith on the other hand; we shall hardly wonder, considering what human nature is, that in opposing Rome, they sometimes allowed themselves to be betrayed into a warmth and intemperance of expression which is inconsistent with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Evangelical doctrine, notwithstanding it has been so grossly mis-stated by Ultra High Church and Tractist writers, inculcates and produces as deep a penitence and humiliation before the Lord on account of sin as the opposite system; and by no means describes the transition from a state of guilt and condemnation to that of pardon and peace as being an easy one. Methodism especially, as you are aware, my dear sir, has been on the point of repentance

* Exp. Creed. London, 1832, p. 496.

singularly primitive. The penitents within her pale have sought for mercy with many cries and tears, and often so loudly, that persons who were strangers to all such spiritual distresses in their own case have been greatly offended. One would often have thought under special visitations of the divine Spirit, that a deeper feeling of repentance than that experienced in the days of Cyprian, Jerome, and Tertullian, was beginning to accompany the ministrations of the word. Evangelical doctrine, as taught by its ministers, acknowledges "One baptism for the remission of sins" as well as the Nicene Creed; but it regards that baptism as a standing pledge on the part of our covenant God, that remission of sins, shall not be withheld, when applied for in deep humiliation of spirit and penitent faith. It does not promise impunity to sin; for the penitence which it declares as necessary, it does not look upon as the mere natural passion of sorrow, nor as unconnected with the putting away of all unholy practices, and the use of self denial, but rather as that godly sorrow which principally is the fruit of the Spirit's convincing and subduing influence, and is as necessary to faith, as faith is necessary to pardon. The faith in Christ which it requires, is not only belief in facts and truths, but penitent affiance or trust in the atonement, and hence it is "faith in his blood," a faith this which cannot possibly be exercised without previous humiliation and brokenness of heart.

To shew how even the Churchism, so to speak of a former day, concurred in this doctrine, and how faith was *sola sed non solitaria* in the work of justifying, let the words of Hooker be considered.—

"It is a childish cavil wherewith in the matter of

justification our adversaries do so greatly please themselves, exclaiming that we tread all Christian virtues under our feet, and require nothing in Christians but faith, because we teach that faith alone justifieth, whereas by this speech we never meant to exclude either Hope or Charity from being joined as inseparable mates with Truth in the man that is justified, or works from being added as necessary duties required at the hands of every justified man. But to shew that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ unto justification, and Christ the only garment which being so put on covereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the imperfection of our works, preserveth us blameless in the sight of God, before whom otherwise the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable, yea, to shut us from the kingdom of heaven where nothing that is not absolute can enter. That our dealing with them be not as childish as theirs with us, when we hear of salvation by Christ alone, considering that (alone) as an exclusive particle, we are to note what it doth exclude and where. If I say such a judge only ought to determine such a case, all things incident to the determination thereof, besides the person of the judge, as laws, depositions, evidences, &c. are not thereby excluded. Persons are not excluded from witnessing herein or assisting, but merely from determining and giving sentence. * * * Touching the rest which is laid for the foundation of our faith it imparteth further, that by Him we are called, that we have redemption, remissions of sins through His blood, health by His stripes ; justice (*i. e.* righteousness) by Him ; that He doth sanctify His Church and make it glorious to Himself ; that entrance into joy shall be given

us by Him, yea, all things by Him alone. Howbeit not so by Him alone, as if in us to our vocation the hearing of the gospel, to our justification, faith ; to our sanctification the fruits of the Spirit, to our entrance into rest, perseverance in hope in faith in holinesss were not necessary.”*

The same admirable divine in a former section of the profound and elaborate discourse from which this quotation is taken, observes, “Let it be counted folly, or fury, or phrensy, whatsoever, it is our comfort and our wisdom. We care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned and God hath suffered, that God hath made himself the Son of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God.” While Ultra High Church doctrine, even in the case of a true penitent, leads the awakened soul to hope for pardon chiefly from the depth and continuance of his distress, but forbids him to come to any conclusion on the subject, to which conclusion in fact of himself he never could come, and to which no Church forms of confession and absolution could ever bring him ; and while it directs him to look with trembling apprehension to the judgment day, and shuts him out for ever from peace and joy in this life : our doctrine on the other hand teaches, and not to shorten or destroy the sacred tenderness of repentance either, that the prodigal son may return to his Father’s house and be joyful and received with joy.

What is more than this, it remembers that the Holy Ghost is revealed as the Comforter and glorifies Him

* Learned Discourse on Justification.

as such, directing the praying and believing penitent to await the seal of pardon from Him, which alone can assure him that the anger of God is turned away. You have not to learn from me, my dear sir, for the first time, that the doctrine of the Spirit's direct and personal witness to our adoption, notwithstanding its recognition by Bishop Pearson and host of good and gifted men besides, is deemed fanaticism and stigmatized as such ; but is it any more fanaticism to believe that the Holy Ghost can give spiritual joy, and a comfortable persuasion of the Father's favour, than that He can awaken alarm, and give godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation ? The High Churchman himself pleads for one part of this experience, and is one part more fanatical than the other ? Both are equally opposed to the experience of the unawakened worldling. Is a sense of the divine favour to be deemed fanatical when all joyful obedience, gratitude, and active holiness must depend upon it, or to say the least upon some degree of it ? Whether is it most fanatical to look for the seal of pardon immediately from the Spirit, the source of all joy and peace, and who, when in us, is the earnest of our future inheritance, or from the *opus operatum* of some external ordinance to which is attributed in itself transcendental efficacy ? Is the Holy Ghost comforter to none but those who have kept their baptismal covenant pure and unbroken, and that too, from the very time of the ordinance ? Are these alone, of all to whom the gospel is preached and to whom the universal church opens her gates, the subjects of joy in the Holy Ghost ?

If the doctrine in Scripture be stated so plainly and simply as in words like these, " the Spirit itself beareth

witness with our Spirit that we are the sons of God," what difficulty prevents the reception of this truth in its most obvious sense. If "the Spirit beareth witness," if "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying Abba Father," then the testimony is independent of externalism. If He bear witness to our spirit, then nothing is absolutely necessary to come between, for our spirits are our inmost selves. The testimony is borne between Spirit and spirit. To say the Holy Ghost cannot do what these words imply, is impious. To say that it never is done, because those who make the assertion never had the enjoyment of it in their own experience, is of the very essence of rationalism, and no better than Hume's argument against miracles. From the very nature of Christianity this witness is the abiding seal of justification, however the sacraments are visible seals of *all* covenant blessings. Every penitent person is to be enjoined to wait for it in deep humiliation, earnest prayer, and firm faith. Not daring like the Tractist, or Romanist, to infer his pardon from the depth of his sorrow, nor from his hatred of sin, nor even from his faith, he looks in the use of all the ordinances, sacramental or otherwise, unto Him whom he has offended, and waits till He shall speak for himself and convey through the appointed Comforter the token of his gracious acceptance. The applicant may wait long in some instances, while in others it may be different; but whether or not, this is left in the hands of Him with whom we have to do. It is wretchedly unworthy of learned and sober men and speaks little for their observance of human nature to represent all this as "high feeling," "wrought up," and as what men "may

produce in themselves;”* as though forgiving love did not occasion the deepest humility, and as though a broken-hearted and afflicted penitent could produce in his own mind the holy tranquility of subsequent years. Until the Spirit of adoption is given, that is, so given as to be a conscious gift in the understanding and affections, there can be no real love, joy, or peace, and therefore the blessing of His presence to a sincere and awakened heart cannot fail to be an object of intense desire. If you will accept the following lines, not for any merit they possess, but for the sake of relieving a possible tedium which my dulness may inflict upon you, they are at your service.

I.

Where shall the wandering soul, ah, where find rest

And look serenely to her native sky?

The eaglet fondles in the parent nest,

And lambs beneath their guardian fleeces lie.

Shall ev’ning light repose in yonder dell,

Where heav’n and earth meet in revealing love,

And scan each other; and shall man still dwell

A trembling gazer on the world above?

That which is deathless in me, ne’er with joy

Can look to heav’n, unless it heav’nly be;

Can guilt be heav’nly, or can guilt employ

A father’s peace to form her purity?

* Notes of Dr. Pusey’s Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Redeemer mine ! and doth thy word contain
No promis'd guerdon for the weary heart ?
May not of sin the sorrow as the stain,
Resign in me its dread oppressive part ?

Pardon is Thine ! and courts above may hear
When my weak prayer has sped and gain'd the grace;
But who shall waft the echo to my ear,
And bring the blessing to its resting place ?

The church's voice may soothe but cannot calm,
Am I assur'd the word doth speak to me ?
Judge in my own behoof, shall I my balm
Wring, as an extract from my misery ?

Shall reason in the storm appear and say,
"Soul, thou hast tears, and thou hast faith, be still!"
Tears cause not their own ceasing, nor delay,
Nor faith but as a storm-toss'd vessel reel.

While love is held by fear, and hope by dread,
Sorrow is sov'reign, nor can reason move ;
While all within like a thousand hands outspread,
Demands a pardon from a voice above.

Spirit of peace this troubled heart knows thee !
And when, and where thou stay'st, its woe is o'er ;
Fear like the mantling shades of night do flee,
And reason stays to echo and adore.

Thou givest grief, and in thy joy a part,
May not the contrite higher wafted share ?
Pardon in heaven, is pardon in the heart,
When thou becom'st the Father's messenger,

Evangelical doctrine provides far more efficiently than what is called Anglicanism, for the existence and spread of holiness ; because it leads us directly to its proximate cause, the love of Christ ; and not only so ; it is far more reverent, and implies more prostration of spirit, to wait before God in earnest supplication until He himself speaks peace, than to fly to the Church and take spiritual lenitives from her supposed storehouse of transcendental grace. It is not very reverent to regard an individual as regenerate, and united to Christ, and as having put on Christ, who is as unconscious of sanctified tempers and holy hopes as a stock or a stone. The Tractarian may be assured there is no great glory brought to Christ, when insensible sonship, heirship, and grace are brought under his theory of religion.

Whatever influence church forms of absolution might have to soothe the wounded conscience for a time, and however scriptural they might be in themselves, and however authoritative in their abstract truth, supposing the evangelical conditions they involve to be complied with ; yet the repetition of them shews with what diffidence, and with what an utter want of authority they are applied to particular cases, and how utterly inadequate they are to still the tempest of guilty fear in the soul. Only Christ can say "Peace be still," and His spokesman is the Spirit of peace.*

Not to lay stress upon the fact that the Christianity of the apostolical epistles is experimental Christianity, the

* Bishop Taylor himself admits that "it concerns us in maintenance of the dignity of our nature, to say that the Spirit of God can inform our soul as well as our soul can inform our body." Works, c. 3, lxxxiii.

religion of feeling, as well as of knowledge and practice; how strictly fanatical it is for an adult Christian to assume the existence and reception of grace without any conscious token of its saving results upon the heart and conscience. It is that kind of fanaticism which does not so much involve mystery as contradiction. So true it is that we must be consciously pardoned, I do not say before we may be really so, but before we can serve God “without *fear* in righteousness and holiness before him all the days of our life;” and equally true, that as that pardon takes place in heaven, God himself can only tell us when the gracious act is passed.*

It is very likely that you, my dear sir, in common

* Dr. Pusey in Tract 67, asserts “that the Apostles in speaking of the spiritual blessings of believers, speak of them as having been conferred at a definite past period, as δικαιωθέντες having been justified,” καταλλαγέντες “having been reconciled,” and thence seems to infer that the past period in question was the time of the baptism of these believers. But why not refer it to their past penitent affiance in Christ as the result of which they received the Spirit of Adoption. As the epistles were addressed to believers, the Apostles could not speak otherwise than in the way above stated. Is this a less plain and simple rule of interpretation? Is it not a rule which is every where sanctioned by the *usus loquendi* of the Apostles? According to this writer, by the words in Romans v. 1, “Being justified,” the translators of our version meant, “being in a justified state,” (and as Dr. Pusey teaches through means of baptism) “we have peace with God,” &c. But in the meantime, leaving our translators out of the question, what becomes of the Apostle’s argument? Let an unprejudiced man read over the preceding chapters either in Greek or English, and then filled with the thoughts which they inspire, and coming full upon this illative, “Therefore,” will he be able in such a case, and on the Professor’s principles, to discover any sequence? or to perceive what the word, therefore means? According to Dr. Pusey’s mode of exposition, the Apostle’s argument would amount to this; all the world is guilty before God, and none have attained to justification; neither the Greek with his wisdom, nor the Jew with his church privileges, ordinances, and sacrament of initiation, therefore, sinners are now justified by a sacrament! Alas! when inspired Apostles are tortured to support the Fathers.

† But so have I seen the returning sea enter upon the strand; and the waters rolling towards the shore, throw up little portions of the tide, and retire

with myself, may have been struck with a somewhat beautifully expressed passage in Bishop Jeremy Taylor's discourse on Godly Fear,† in which pardon in individuals is compared to waves which ebb and flow on the sea shore ; and is represented as advancing or receding, according to our performance or omission of deeds of devotion and love. This passage like the whole theology of the school to which it belongs, has the singular confusion on the one hand of blending judicial justification, and personal sanctification together ; and on the other, if the doctrine it contains be carried out to all its consequences, then there is no line between spiritual life and death ; no barrier between heaven and hell, the "great gulph" disappears, the glory and beauty of holiness, the image of God, and the bliss of his fulness of joy, may be lessened down by imperceptible degrees, like the shadows of a departing day, to darkness and condemnation and the bitterness of the second death ;

as if nature meant to play, and not to change the abode of waters ; but still the flood crept by little steppings, and invaded more by his progressions than he lost by his retreat : and having told the number of its steps, it possesses its new portion till the angel calls it back, that it may leave its unfaithful dwelling of the sand : so is the pardon of our sins ; it comes by slow motions, and first quits a present death, and turns, it may be, into a sharp sickness ; and if that sickness prove not health to the soul, it washes off, and it may be, will dash against the rock again, and proceed to take off the several instances of anger and the periods of wrath, but all this while it is uncertain concerning our final interest, whether it be ebb or flood : and every hearty prayer, and every bountiful alms, still enlarges the pardon, or adds a degree of probability and hope, and then a drunken meeting, or a covetous desire, or a act of lust, or looser swearing, idle talk, or neglect of religion, makes the pardon retire ; and while it is disputed between Christ and Christ's enemy who shall be Lord, the pardon fluctuates like the wave, striving to climb the rock, and is washed off like its own retinue, and it gets possession by time and uncertainty, by difficulty and the degrees of a hard progression. Works, Sermon viii. s. 3.

none being able to look at a certain point and say, This is life, or at another, and say, This is death. All this too, whether the doctrine of *conscious* acceptance with God be held or not, for the confusion quite obliterates the distinction between a state of condemnation and a justified state, between those who are "in Christ Jesus" and those who are not; it throws the whole system of Christian doctrine into an involution which can never be evolved until Rome comes, and by her usurped authority, cuts the knot which theological skill has vainly endeavoured to unloose.

Yet, although our doctrine recognizes the comfortable persuasion of present pardon, it does not, as our opponents absurdly assert, involve a persuasion of our certain salvation at last. Let not the onus of Augustine and Calvin be laid upon us but upon the proper shoulders.

As Wesley sings:

This blessed word be mine,
Just as the port is gain'd;
Kept by the pow'r of grace divine,
I have the faith maintained.

The Apostles of my Lord,
To whom it first was given;
They could not speak a greater word,
Nor all the saints in heaven.

It is alone this doctrine of conscious justification in opposition to sacramental and insensible justification, that finds scope and objects for all the spiritual affections of the human mind. Some of the more serious and devout minds among the Tractists are looking with a favourable eye to certain doctrines of Romanism, because they promise to relieve the coldness of mere externalism; such as to those of the efficacy of prayer for the dead,

the invocation of saints, and the commemoration of them in services of public and religious worship. All this is to engage and feed the affections of the unoccupied heart. The vanity of this promise is great, but it is never felt to be greater than when in the heart of a true Christian, the Comforter not only sanctifies the affections, making them more intense and true, but fixes them on objects which shall secure their fruition for ever.

Such an one never feels the restlessness and disquietude of an awakened Anglican or Romanist. God is his, and in Him he has all. When the peace of God which is produced by the attesting Comforter resides in the heart, no need will be felt of the soothing stillness of midnight, nor of lighted lamps, nor of choral chants, the whole producing an entrancement of the imagination, mistaken for peace; nor when "the faith which is of the operation of the Spirit effects a realization of things unseen, will there be felt a want of prayers for the death, or ideal pictures of the state of departed saints; nor when pardoning mercy produces a sense of the majesty and purity of God, and of the holiness that becometh His house, will there be felt any need of that factitious dignity with which some would invest external ordinances, consisting of architectural sublimities and impressive rites. Not that I wish to assert that the proprieties of external worship are to be excluded, but simply that the pardoned heart does not need them wherewith to feed its affections. The Tractist system professes to be a system of high spirituality, and its adherents introduce themselves as men of high spiritual views; but how strange it is, that learned and professedly devout individuals should so play upon the words spiritual and

spirituality. The spirituality of the Scriptures signifies that principle of life breathed in us by the Holy Ghost, which consists in holy motives and sanctified and energetic affections, in opposition to that carnal mind which we naturally inherit. The spirituality of the Anglican school, so called, is a transcendental and mysterious virtue, by which the Church in her ordinances is supposed to convey to us the grace of Christ though it may be unfelt, untested, and is independent of any acts of the understanding and of the heart. Things so different should never be called by the same word, unless we resolutely set ourselves to seek error. Ether might be called spiritual in a sense, but it is a spirituality which evaporates into air, and ere long, popularly speaking, becomes nothing.

Romanism, whether taught at Rome or Oxford, supplies no real want of our nature; a sufficient token of the injury which Christianity has received at its hands. It has no more efficacy to remove the sins and sorrows of our spirits, than the drop of water, so ardently pleaded for, had to cool the rich man's tongue.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

The Lord's Supper.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE Sacrament of the Lord's Supper while it is a Christian institution, is, at the same time, like baptism, a covenant transaction, and came in place of the Jewish Passover. The Passover was not an arbitrary institution imposed by God upon the Jews for temporal purposes, to awaken gratitude for temporal deliverance, and to serve as a test for national obedience ; it was a great mystery shadowing forth our redemption by Christ. It shadowed forth the event as yet to come. " Christ our Passover," said St. Paul, " is sacrificed for us." The people of Israel were in Egypt under cruel thralldom, and the successive plagues which had been inflicted had not produced the repentance of Pharaoh or their liberation. God in his wrath threatens to destroy the first born of Egypt by the stroke of an angel at midnight.

The people, according to their families, were enjoined to take a lamb, and shed its blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses. Exod. xii. 7. Without shedding of blood there was no remission of sins from the beginning, and here the doctrine is again exhibited ; the appointment of the lamb was the substitution of the innocent for the guilty : voluntarily

taking the shed blood and applying it in the manner specified, was personal faith in God's way of saving: eating the flesh with bitter herbs, called elsewhere the bread of affliction, Deut. xvi. 3, was indicative of the humbled feeling with which the people were required to participate in that salvation: standing with their staves in their hand and with shoes on their feet, and eating in haste, they evinced that life was a short uncertain journey, that while mercy is offered a crisis is at hand, and that whosoever receives the offer must receive it without trifling and without delay. Whilst Israel was in this state of preparation the destroying Angel passed over the land, the first born of Egypt fell under his stroke, but wherever among the Israelites the blood was sprinkled, the covenant sign;—according to his commission, he turned the edge of his sword away. Thus how strikingly were the solemn truths of the gospel adumbrated! Wherever the Jews throughout all their generations observed the Passover, they confessed that they were delivered on that dreadful night by a covenant sealed in the blood of a lamb; connected as that covenant was with a more enlarged engagement in reference to the then present as well as to the future church. The record of the enlarged covenant—the “Book” thereof, was solemnly sprinkled with blood by Moses and read in the audience of all Israel. This was the old covenant.

Now, when our Lord met with the disciples to keep the Passover, he said, “with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,” which solemn and deeply interesting sentence may well be supposed to refer to the great change which was about to be made in the institution.

After the usual Paschal supper he takes the bread which was eaten with the the flesh of the lamb, and an essential part of the Passover feast, and calls it His body; and afterwards the cup, (for the later Jews, as we find from their authorities, had introduced a cup of wine into the ceremony,) and calls it "the cup of the New Testament in *his* blood," alluding doubtless to Jeremiah xxxi. 31. Thus, instead of the blood of the Paschal lamb the cup is spoken of as representing his own blood, and therefore, Himself the lamb. The deliverance is from a darker Egypt—our lost and guilty estate, and penitent and believing acceptors of His grace are gifted with "a better covenant established upon better promises" than that old, and in certain respects, temporary one, made with the Jewish fathers, and is thus described by a profound and gifted writer, "He calls the dispensation of his religion, the new covenant in opposition to this old covenant, which was in its nature, introductory and temporary;" and in reference also to the prediction in Jeremiah xxxi. 31, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." This dispensation has the nature of a covenant, because it contains the "great and precious promises" on the part of God, the forgiveness of sins, the renewal of the heart in holiness, and the all comprehensive engagement, "And I will be their God and they shall be my people," an engagement which includes not only all blessings which "pertain to life and godliness," but, as we learn from our Lord's discourse with the Sadducees, the resurrection of the body and the felicity of an endless future life. All this is promised by God, and on the part of man are required

“repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” by the merit of whose death alone we can claim these blessings, and in sole respect to which, as a satisfaction to divine justice, God places himself in the bond of the covenant to bestow them. This covenant, the blood of Christ, that is, the pouring forth of His blood as a sacrificial victim, at once procured and ratified; so that it stands firm to all truly penitent and contrite spirits who believe in Him; and of this great truth, the Lord's Supper was the instituted sign and seal; and he who in faith drinks of the cup having reference to its signification, that blood of Christ, which confirms to true believers the whole covenant of grace, is assured thereby of its faithfulness and permanence and derives to himself the fulness of its blessings. To this there is no exception, for the covenant, unlike the old, is universal, and hence our Lord adds to the words, “This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed *ἐκχυνόμενον* poured out *περι πολλων* for many,” that is, for all mankind, according to the undoubted use of the word by St. Paul, in Rom. v. 15, and *for*, (*εἰς in order to*) *the remission of sins*, and of necessity, all the penal consequences of human transgression in a future life.”*

By the constant observance of this institute, the supper of the Lord, the apostles who were the governors of the Church, were commanded to shew forth his death until he came again in his glory, 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

The Romanist view of this sacred ordinance is so gross and anti-sacramental, that to my mind it is matter of great regret that so much of Protestant time, labour,

* Watson's Expos. p. 388.

and learning, should have been employed to refute it. On the early promulgation of transubstantiation, the doctrine was generally defended by Aristotelian scholastics; but modern Romanism at least,* has professed great reverence for the Scriptures, and has claimed to interpret the words of our Lord literally; and has thrown upon the Protestant the onus of proving their figurative character, and asks, If our reason is to be the judge of this doctrine, what becomes of the foundation doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation when subjected to the same test? Yet who but a Romanist, whose creed was determined beforehand by usurped authority, would ever think of putting the transubstantiation mystery and the mysteries of the divine nature into the same class of difficulties? Let it be reverently owned that three persons are one God; yet to say that three persons are one person, would be a contradiction. And again, the Eternal Son, and the Man Jesus joined together, are one Christ; this too is a mystery; but to say they are one nature, would be a contradiction.

Let it be owned, however, my dear sir, that our weak and finite intellect cannot judge of contradictions, unless we know for certainty that the whole of the argument to be considered is before us. When revelations are made to us respecting the Divine nature, the argument is not all before us, otherwise there would be no difference between the mind of God and the mind of man; and therefore mystery is the necessary aspect in which this kind of truth is presented, and very likely the more it were revealed the more mysterious it would be. But

* Wiseman's Lectures, 2 v., p. 189.

when we are told that our Lord's body may be whole here before the disciples' eyes, and yet eaten there, raised to the right hand of the majesty on high, and yet manducated in every part of the world below ; then our faculties, given by the God of truth, that we might acquire truth, are confounded, and their testimony is contradicted ; and we have no means of receiving revelation itself. When two propositions are clearly stated, as for instance respecting the two natures of our Lord, then a third proposition may predicate something of both natures conjoined, which cannot severally be predicated of either, and the want of intermediate links of truth may preclude all human reasoning on the subject ; but when our simple apprehension, the first and most unencumbered operation of the mind, is denied, how can truth be acquired at all either from revelation or reflection ? How did the Apostles know, or how should we on their testimony, that our Lord's miracles were real ; that he was actually betrayed by Judas, and died on the cross ?

If our Lord's Body can be eaten and yet whole, on earth and yet in heaven ; then Lazarus might have been dead and yet alive, and the sea of Galilee stormy and yet still, and the pots at Cana full of water and yet wine, and Marcion, though denounced a heretic, yet after all might be right in accounting the scenes of his last passion all a phantom. So direct is the logical connexion between Popery and Deism. Popery gives unto our Lord's Body some of the attributes of spirit, and impugns the incarnation, for he did not assume transcendental flesh, but, "as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, (in the common human sense) he

also himself likewise took part of the same ;” Heb. ii. 14.

By making our participation in Christ to be carnal, it impugns the doctrine of satisfaction ; practically nullifying the atonement itself ; it takes away the sign and seal of the covenant of grace, leaving us no sacrament, and depriving us of that humble and yet sublime faith, which leads to a spiritual and vital communion with Him more real and more deep in meaning than anything which was ever dreamed of in its councils and canons, though abundantly and variously expressed in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. If the Romanist doctrine, that accidents of form and colour may be permitted to delude us as to the substance which they represent, then of what value is the following declaration of the Apostle ?—“ That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have *seen with our eyes* which we have *looked upon* and our hands *have handled* of the word of life. * * * That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ;” 1 John, i. 3. The most simple and submissive mind in the whole band of Apostles, here plainly admits the important evidence of sense ; and bears us out in the bold denial that the God of truth has given us a lying medium of perception, and that he has put sense and faith in direct opposition to each other. However faith may be opposed to reason, understanding by reason no more than a man’s present knowledge ; it can never be opposed to our simple perceptions. Romanism likewise refers to our Lord’s miracle of the loaves, and asks, If the Saviour without creating more substance could with these loaves feed five thousand, and cause baskets full of fragments to

remain, could he not make his body to be in various places and so as be partaken of by different individuals? But did not our Lord create more substance? How quietly is the principal point in this *ad captandum* argument assumed! But however quiet it is, the twelve baskets full that remain are a sufficient refutation. Romanism miserably trifles too in saying that the verb "to be" does not always signify to represent, that "this is my Body" does not necessarily mean "this represents my Body," because that when such figurative sayings as these occur as "I am the true vine," "that rock was Christ," there is some key or expressed indication in the passage itself to explain that what is spoken, is spoken figuratively. For after all this apparent submissive devotion in taking the passage literally, we find that according to St. Matthew, our Lord says of the *cup*, not of the wine within it, "this is my blood," a very common metonymy we grant, but not more common than our Lord's whole manner of speaking was, in the religious teaching of that day. According to St. Luke too, he says, "this cup is the new covenant;" which expression is cited by St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 25; and I would ask, does Romanism keep to its literal interpretation here, and hold that a cup is a covenant? Nor is the Romanist canon of interpretation true. There are many expressions of Scripture necessarily figurative, from the general laws of human language; which are not explained to be so in given cases by any announcement in the context, and amongst the rest the passage in Exodus xii. 11, respecting the paschal lamb, may be

taken ; and specially indeed, because it bears upon the present subject and illustrates it. “ And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, and your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and ye shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord’s passover.”* Is not the lamb spoken of here? but was the lamb the passover? did the lamb pass over the houses of the Egyptians; or was it not the sign of the passover covenant, a covenant of deliverance from death and bondage by sacrificial blood? The disciples of our Lord, therefore, when met together at the last supper might well be told of the bread, “ This is my Body,” meaning this is a sign of my Body, inasmuch as their Jewish predecessors at the paschal ceremony had always been told of the Lamb. “ This is the Lord’s passover,” that is, this is a sign of the passover covenant.

Romanism too derives her doctrine of the Eucharist from the sixth chapter of John, 48 to 51. “ I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever : and the bread that I shall give him is my flesh will I give for the life of the world.”

When this was uttered the Eucharist was not instituted ; and therefore it may not be taken as referring to that institution, any further than as illustrating, *a priori* a spiritual participation of, or believing in Christ by the actions of eating and drinking. Still, if it were con-

* Even the Vulgate. Est enim Phase (id est transitus) Domini.

ceded that all this had a positive and prospective reference to the Eucharist, yet, if Romanism would abide by the canon of interpretation that Dr. Wiseman has adopted for her, it would be found to prove a very Sampson to the building, which it was employed with so much care to construct. For the sixty-third verse, a key to the whole discourse, and which determines its literal or tropical character; says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life," that is, they are to be interpreted in a spiritual manner. Our Lord's disciples had not understood him before, and now he explains himself as teaching a spiritual mystery. This, Tertullian himself, one of our Romanists' great authorities, admits; "*Caro nihil prodest ad vivificandum scilicet. Exequitur etiam quid velit intelligi spiritum. Verba quæ locutus sum verbis spiritus sunt vita sunt,*"* and not only he, but Augustine and a host besides.†

Such is the character of a dogma which rests upon nothing but usurped authority, and is destructive to the souls of men in proportion as it undermines revealed religion, corrupts deep spiritual doctrines, and perverts the signs and seals of the evangelical covenant of grace into objects of idolatrous worship, displacing the genuine love of God shed abroad in the heart through faith, by naturally excited superstitious awe. Rome must hold it because she is committed to it, and has cursed others for denying it.

Luther's consubstantiation avoided the grosser and

* De resurrec. Carn. c. 37., also Hooker's Eccles. Pol. b. 5.

† Bishop Taylor. In the 6th of John, Christ preacheth over and over of eating his flesh and drinking his blood without a sacrament, by the power of faith.—Works, ch. 5, c. i.

more revolting errors of the Church of Rome, yet did not altogether escape consequences which were palpably contradictory. It only shews that noble and emancipated minds cannot all at once divest themselves of their former trammels. You will have been struck with the justness with which the article of the Church of England remarks, that transubstantiation "overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament;" and assuredly if we have regard to sacramental consistency, the bread of the Eucharist is no more changed into the body, soul, and divinity of our blessed Lord, than the water of baptism is changed into the substance of the Holy Spirit. Whether a sacrament be explained to be a sign of grace, or a channel thereof, or both, as soon as our union with Christ is said to be effected by a carnal and gross participation of him, such as manducation, it is then a sacrament no more, but "a fond thing of man's invention." Such views had no more place even in the errors of the early fathers, than they had in the inspired and infallible documents of the apostles themselves. Our Tractarian writers, it is true, reject the doctrine of Transubstantiation, not because of its opposition to our perceptions and to Scripture, 1 Cor. x. 17; where the communicated element is called bread as before; but because it is not found in their favourite age of antiquity, and because it savours of boldness to assert the mode of Christ's presence when men are assured of the fact. This is a mild form of rebuke, and well calculated to bespeak a respectful consideration for even the most revolting dogma of Popery; yet, if the tendencies of the school did not go beyond this, it were well. But while these teachers strenuously uphold all the other associations of the Romanist theory, while they

account the minister a priest, the apostolic succession a consecrated line of priests *more Judæo*, the Lord's Table an altar, the Eucharist a sacrifice; while they place lighted candles on the altar, and make gestures of adoring reverence towards the sacred place of administration; none but a few well taught and discriminating minds, in their congregations, will gather a different impression from that produced by the Romanist doctrine.

The terms "priest" and "altar" can be of no meaning (except it be a spiritual one), where there is no propitiatory sacrifice; and thus the elements in the eucharist are practically made by our Tractarians to assume a sacrificial character. The sign becomes an object of faith rather than an aid to it, and too often Christ in all his peace giving and sanctifying influence, is thereby excluded from His sacraments by that very system which proposes to bring Him nearer.

* The learned Cudworth thus expresses the result of his researches and reasonings on the subject of the Lord's supper:—

"Thus having declared and demonstrated the true notion of the Lord's Supper, we see then how that theological controversy, which hath cost so many disputes, whether the Lord's Supper be a sacrifice, is already decided; for it is not SACRIFICIUM, but EPULUM; ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας; not a sacrifice, but a feast upon sacrifice; or else, in other words, not *oblatio sacrificii*; but, as Tertullian excellently speaks, *participatio sacrificii*; not the offering of something up to God upon an altar, but the eating of something which comes from God's altar, and is set upon our tables. Neither was it ever known among the Jews or heathens. that those tables, upon which they did their sacrifices, should be called by the name of altars. St. Paul, speaking of the feasts upon the idol sacrifices, calls the places, upon which they were eaten, "the table of devils," because the devil's meat was eaten upon them; not the altars of devils; and yet, doubtless, he spake according to the true propriety of speech, and in those technical words that were then in use amongst them. And, therefore, keeping the same analogy, he must needs call the communion table by the name of the Lord's table, *i. e.* the table upon which God's meat is to be eaten; not his altar, upon which it is offered."—Discourse on the Lord's Supper, chap. v. init.

Penitent faith in Christ crucified is too fervent and absorbed a faculty, to bear any interruption or confusion from without; and if He has not absorbed in Himself priest, altar, and sacrifice, then faith is left to a dark and clouded medium; not the darkness of the Divine presence, dwelling between the cherubim, upon which it has a fearful love of gazing; but the darkness of an interposing veil, hiding that presence from us, beautifully wrought, but long since rent and taken away, to admit us, the first tabernacle no longer standing, into the vision and enjoyment of a better dispensation.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

The Lord's Supper.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN the great revulsion of religious views at the Reformation, it was, as might have been expected; the human mind which had long been bound in the iron bands of superstition, on obtaining freedom, bounded in many cases to the other extreme of unhallowed license, and directed men to assert the *modus existendi* of divine things,—a subject to which reason cannot be legitimately applied.

Accordingly Zuinglius, Carlostadt and others, adopted a view very different from that which has just been considered, and in which they have been followed by some of the Nonconformists of our country,* which is, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is merely a commemorative rite and token of Christian profession, that the elements are mere emblems of our Lord's Body and Blood, and being connected with religious services

* It is not intended in this remark to include such Nonconformists as Watts, Doddridge, and other more modern names. The sacramental hymns of both the divines just mentioned are sufficiently in proof that they held the covenant character of the Lord's Supper, and with the sentiments of those hymns thousands of Evangelical Nonconformists at this present day agree.

are thereby naturally fitted to awaken devout emotions in the minds of the communicants. While on the one hand the Roman superstition with its revolting consequences is repudiated; this last view, as you are well aware, will be found defective.

The way to form a true idea of the import of our Lord's words is to turn to the inspired comment of His apostles.

In 1 Cor. xi. 23, there is this remarkable passage:—

“For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks he brake it and said, Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.”

After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, “This cup is the New Testament in my blood, this do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup do ye shew forth the Lord's death until he come.”

From all this it appears that the Apostle was favoured with a special revelation respecting the nature and intent of this holy rite; for the fact of its institution needed no revelation. This fact could not but be known to all the churches, through the medium of those Apostles who were its witnesses, and who would make it known as far as it was a commemorative rite to the whole body of the faithful. These words, however, shew that something more was intended in the Eucharist than a religious commemoration of our Lord's death, or than the exhibition of an emblem, and the sacred mystery lies in these

words, "This is my body," "This cup is the New Testament (or covenant) in my blood,"—the import of which is as follows:—"With these signs (not in them) I impart unto thee penitent and believing soul, my redeeming benefits. Whatsoever accrues from my Humanity and its assumption into Deity—the body of which Humanity being raised from the dead dieth no more, this benefit I herewith offer. I ensure to thee that immortality and sanctification of thy redeemed body which are the fruit of its mystical conjunction with mine, giving thee herewith the pledge of rising again as I am risen again. Whatever atoning efficacy is procured by my sacrificial blood, offered together with my body, as an oblation and satisfaction unto Divine justice, I likewise bestow, meeting the claims of the violated law, sealing unto thee all the promises of my gospel, and opening thy way into the holiest of all. Thus eating of this bread and drinking of this cup, thou takest part in a covenant, the terms of which from time to time thou continuest to accept, and so long, the benefits of which I am ever faithful to impart."

Christ is thus mystically imparted, not only in our having the application of his atoning blood on the one hand, but as he is "the resurrection and the life" of our body on the other.

This view is borne out by what follows. The Apostle declares that "whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." And again, "he eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord's body." The doctrine of which passage is, that sin will be imputed to the individual who partakes of that holy

sacrament in impenitency and hardness of heart, or in impious mockery. But sin against what?—not against a divine institution, viewed merely as an institution;—not merely against that mercy, viewed in the abstract, which provides a mean of grace for sinners, but especially, and particularly, against the Lord's body and blood. He discerns not the Lord's body. His body "dead because of sin," and having no life in his soul by reason of privation of righteousness, he receives not in penitent faith, Christ as his life, and therefore partakes not through his blood of pardoning and redeeming benefits; no hand of contrite affiance is stretched out to receive these gifts, and whether the elements are partaken of as common food, or as invested with a supernatural character, if there is no believing reference to that grace of Christ and union to Himself which they are designed to convey, there is no discerning as an object of faith and hope, life through Christ's body, and pardon and peace through his blood. However the lips may confess, the soul can never be said to discern that which is veiled from its perceptions, and is utterly dead to its affections.

This discerning not the Lord's body is guilt, and the unworthy—that is the wilfully impenitent and sinning recipient, drinks condemnation to himself, for in the sacrament the blessings are not the less offered because he receives them not. The outward sign in such a case seals his guilt, which in other cases seals a blessing.

A passage too in the 16th verse of the 10th chapter of the same epistle bears full upon the same point. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which

we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." The word communion in this case can mean nothing less than participation; and the cup of blessing and the broken bread are here said to realize our possession of Christ's benefits, of which, to believers, they are not merely a sign, but an *efficax tessera*, as Beza says—an effectual token of their actual impartation; and in the company of those who in all ages and in all places thus faithfully commune, we have the one mystic Body of Christ, his church. Partaking of the benefits derived from his sacrificed and glorified body, they form in the aggregate that mystic body.*

It is highly probable, as has been before intimated, that the tree of life in the *primæval* paradise was a sacrament to man in his innocency.

The garden of Eden where God manifested his presence to our unfallen parents, was, compared with the world around, a natural Holy of Holies. There the tree of life was placed in the midst; other trees that were good for common food were distinctly and separately mentioned, shewing plainly that this tree was not one of that class, but was rather a visible pledge, or to use more sacramental language, an outward sign of a

* This is acknowledged by the Church of England in her well known prayer at the Communion Service. "Almighty and everlasting God we most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, *which is the blessed company of all faithful people*,"

higher and more blessed life, to be vouchsafed to man as the reward of unsinning obedience. But when he became a sinner, this privilege was withdrawn; life, as far as it could be derived from obedience, was utterly lost; and to teach this more impressively during the first age of the fallen world, fiery cherubims with flaming swords guarded the access to this sacred tree, and by their adverse position sternly forbade the sinner to approach.

But when the glorified Saviour declares, Rev. ii. 7, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the paradise of God," that is, heaven; do we not see that the blessing which could not be claimed on the ground of innocency, is vouchsafed to us on other terms? The flaming swords are withdrawn, and the angels themselves are on our side. And when we see a Tree of Life, not only in the morning of the world, but also in the visions of St. John, are we not taught that to eat and live is the mode of participation, both in the covenant of paradise and the covenant of grace.

The life giving tree exactly points out the relation in which Christ stands to us believers. He assures us that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood shall live for ever. Thus Watson:—"To live in paradise, the fruit of the tree of life was eaten, but it was not a sacrifice. It was the pledge of life, but not through the death of a victim. There was then life without death. The flesh of Christ, which he gives for the life of the world, and which we eat spiritually, this also is the pledge of life, but of life through death. Nor is the act of eating under the two covenants the same. One is expressive of the confidence of an innocent creature in the goodness

and faithfulness of God never offended, promising life ; the other properly speaking of faith, the trust of a guilty creature, of one who feels and acknowledges his guilt, in the rich and sovereign grace of God offended, and exercised through Christ alone. The way to the mercy-seat is safe, wherever there is this trust in free unmerited goodness ; but if we go even there without this, trusting in any thing beside, we go in fact to the gate that is guarded by the cherubim, and the flaming sword turns every way. O, fly from this angry portal ; ‘ My son,’ said Joshua, “ give, I pray thee, glory to the God of Israel: and make confession unto him ;’ say, ‘ I have sinned.’ Let thy only advocate be the sprinkled blood, and thou shalt eat and live for ever.”*

The outward form of the eucharist, like that of the primitive sacrament just described, is such as to shew an analogy between the manner in which we are naturally nourished by food, of which bread and wine are elements, and that in which we are spiritually sustained in the life of grace. Our Lord did not take the flesh of the paschal lamb, and call that his body, for such an act would have had the effect of perpetuating animal sacrifices, whereas they were for ever abrogated by his “ offering himself once for all” ; but he took bread, and by saying of it “ This is my body,” he preserved by the idea of body, on the one part, the view of his sacrificial death and oblation of himself, and in the sign of bread itself he exhibited the further view of sustained life and immortality, and the means by which we are incorporated into his mystical body.

* Works, vol. iii. p. 72.

The act itself of taking and eating must be significant, and correspondent with that act by which the Israelite in Goshen humbly and reverently took of the blood of lamb to sprinkle it on his door-post, and in silence and haste, ate of its flesh, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. On the part of the penitential and believing recipient, it exhibits that vital and personal faith, by which he discerns the spiritual intent of this holy sacrament, and lays hold, so to speak, of the gracious benefits exhibited and sealed therein; and this believing affiance in and spiritual participation of Christ, that is, the mystic partaking of his body as our pledge of immortality, as well as in its connexion with his blood, the sign likewise, and especially so of the atonement, is alone the eating and drinking mentioned in John vi. 58.

It appears to me that the exhibition of the element of bread in the Eucharist as the pledge of our bodies, being through our conjunction with Christ, made eventually immortal, is too much overlooked. This view is subordinate and superadded to the principal one, but it is not without its importance and impressiveness. We are generally so engaged in studying those precious promises which refer to the soul, as to forget that we have bodies which require to be redeemed and sanctified too; and although the written word contains the promise of this redemption, yet it is nowhere visibly embodied, till we come to the table of the Lord. There is a harmony and beauty in the institution of a sign to assure us sacramentally that, as "Christ the first fruits" is immortal, so shall they also be who "are Christ's at his coming."

If the water of baptism is the sign or emblem of our inward washing by the Holy Ghost, so does the sign of

Christ's body stand as the pledge of our body being fashioned like his own; it is thus that the Church of England prays "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body," and directs attention to an immortality in the words of administration, "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve *thy* body and soul to everlasting life."

With regard to the manner in which the Holy Ghost receives of the things which are Christ's and shews them unto us, that is to say, how he applies the benefits of Christ's Body and Blood to us in the Sacrament, thereby establishing a *κοινωνία*—a fellowship or participation, we can know no more than we can track the viewless winds, or than we can know how he applies the same benefits in those cases in which we cannot have the sacrament. The devout disciple learns from the word that Christ is imparted, and with this fact rests satisfied.

The views, however, expressed above, are mainly those of the greatest and best men of all ages.

Thus Calvin, without, however, as in other instances, pledging myself to approve of every expression he uses. "To this comment (namely, the Romanist) we oppose not only the plain words of Scripture, but the very nature of Sacraments. For where will be the signification of the Lord's Supper if there be no analogy between the visible sign and the spiritual thing signified? Bread to be a sign would be a false and delusive appearance. What, in that case, would be the thing signified but a mere imagination? If, therefore, it behoveth that there should be an agreement between a sign and its truth, it must be true bread, and not imaginary, which figures forth the true Body of Christ.

Hence the Body of Christ is not here given to us simply, but in food, and in vain do we expect colour to nourish, it must be substance, so that as the truth stands in the thing itself, there must be no frustration in the sign. Rejecting, therefore, the delirium of the Papists, let us see how the Body of Christ is really given to us. Certain explain that he is given to us in that we are made participants of all those blessings which Christ has

Huic commento non tantum opponimus aperta Scripturæ verba sed ipsam Sacramentorum naturam. Qualis enim erit Cœnæ significatio si nulla sit inter signum visibile et rem spiritualem analogia? Signum esse volunt falsam et delusoriam panis speciem quid igitur erit res signata quam mera imaginatio? Ergo si convenientiam signo esse oportet cum sua veritate: necesse est verum esse panem, non imaginarium qui verum Corpus Christi figuret. Deinde non simpliciter hic datur nobis Corpus Christi sed in cibum; color autem panis nequaquam alit sed substantia, denique ut in re constet veritas non sit in signo frustratio. Rejecto itaque Papistarum delirio, videamus quomodo nobis detur Corpus Christi. Quidam nobis dari exponunt dum participes efficimur omnium bonorum quæ nobis Christus in corpore suo acquisivit: dum fide inquam amplectimur Christum pro nobis crucifixum et a mortuis excitatum; eoque modo efficaciter omnibus ejus bonis communicamus. Qui sic sentiunt fruuntur sane illo sensu. Ego autem tunc nos demum participare Christi bonis agnosco, postquam Christum ipsum obtinemus. Obtineri autem dico, non tantum quum pro nobis factum fuisse victimam credimus, sed dum in nobis habitat, dum est unum nobiscum, dum ejus sumus membra ex carne ejus, dum in unum denique et vitam et substantiam (ut ita loquar) cum ipso coalescimus. Præterea audio quid verba sonent, ne que enim mortis tantum ac resurrectionis suæ beneficium nobis offert Christus, sed corpus ipsum in quo passus est ac resurrexit. Concludo realiter (ut vulgo loquuntur) hoc est vere nobis in Cœna dari Christi corpus ut sit animis nostris in cibum salutarem. Loquor vulgari more, sed intelligo substantia corporis pasci animas nostras, ut vere unum efficiamur cum eo, vel quod idem valet, vim ex Christi carne, vivificam in nos per Spiritum diffundi, quamvis longe a nobis distet nec miscætur nobiscum. * * * * Atqui hæc communicatio corporis Domini, quam nobis in Cœna exhiberi dico, nec localem præsentiam nec Christi descensum, nec infinitam extensionem, nec aliud quicquam tale flagitat: nam quum Cœna cælestis sit actio, minime absurdum est Christum in cælo manentem a nobis recipi. * * * Hic ergo fides nobis succurat postquam omnes carnis sensus deficiunt.—Calvin ad. Loc. 1 Cor. xi. 29.

acquired for us in his Body. I say, whilst by faith we embrace Christ crucified for us, and raised from the dead; and in this manner (*i. e. without any sign*) we efficaciously communicate in all his benefits. Those who think thus may legitimately enjoy this sense; but I acknowledge that we only partake of Christ's benefits after we obtain Christ himself. However, I assert him to be obtained not only when we believe in Him as made a victim for us, but as he dwells in and is one with us, while we are his members and of his flesh: in fine, while we are one in life and substance, and, so to speak, coalesce with Him. Besides, I regard what words imply; for Christ does not only offer to us the benefit of his death and resurrection, but his body itself, in which he suffered and likewise rose. I conclude that in reality, (as is commonly said,) the body of Christ is truly given to us in the supper that it may be healthy sustenance to our souls. I speak in the vulgar manner; but I understand the substance of His body to feed our souls, and to make us truly one with Him; or what stands to the same thing, a life giving power from the flesh of Christ diffused by the Spirit in us, although it be far off and mix not with us." * * * And again, in reference to the objection popularly stated how a body that is in heaven should be given to us on earth. "But this communication of the Body of the Lord which I assert to be exhibited in the supper, asks not a local presence nor a descent of Christ, nor an infinite extension, nor anything of the kind whatever; for when the supper is a heavenly action, it is not at all absurd that Christ should remain in heaven and yet be by us received." * * *

“Faith runs to our succour when our fleshy senses are deficient.”

So also Hooker. “I see not which way it should be gathered by the words of Christ, when and where the bread is his body, and the cup his blood, but only in the very heart and soul of him which receiveth them. As for the Sacraments, they really exhibit, but for ought we can gather out of that which is written of them, they are not really, nor do really contain in themselves, that grace which, with them, or by them, it pleaseth God to bestow. If, on all sides, it be confest that the grace of baptism is poured into the soul of man, that by water we receive it, although it be neither seated in the water, nor the water changed into it, what should induce men to think that the grace of the Eucharist must be in the Eucharist before it can be in us that receive it. The fruit of the Eucharist is the participation of the body and blood of Christ.”*

So Bishop Jewell. “Our meat is in heaven on high and we are below on the earth,”† and amongst ancient writers many others to the same effect, as well as the 25th Article of the Church of England, which says, “The mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper is faith.”

And so Mr. Watson, than whom the Church of Christ in modern days, has not had, as you know, a more gifted or reverential teacher. “As, therefore, the bread itself was an emblem of his body offered for our sins, so the taking and eating of the bread must be figurative in

* Eccles. Pol. Lib. 5. † Jewell on Sacraments.

its import also, and denotes that reception of Christ's sacrifice by which its benefits are personally communicated, which, as we are taught throughout the whole New Testament is done by a true faith." Thus, therefore, to believe or trust in the sacrifice of Christ, is to eat his flesh and drink his blood, and from this results life, which includes restoration to the divine favour, the nourishment of the soul in spiritual vigour. "He that eateth me even he shall live by me," John vi. 57, and life or felicity in the world to come. "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." John vi. 58. * * * And this life or felicity in the world to come, includes, as even was understood, under the old covenant, the resurrection and immortality of the body, there is a "resurrection unto life, and a resurrection of damnation," which is opposed to life, and, therefore, in the Eucharist, there is a sacramental reception in every believers case, of grace which brings pardon and holiness to the soul, and eventual glory and immortality to the body, of which grace, in all its future necessity and increase, it is a pledge; and as Mr. Watson says further, "He who truly receives these elements discerning their intent and exerting faith in the great object represented, which is Christ's sacrifice for sin, not only thus publicly and statedly professes his acceptance of that sacrifice as the only ground of his hope of salvation, and his sole dependance upon it, but actually derives to himself its stupendous benefits."

Thus, by its indispensable connexion with vital faith on the one hand, this sacrament is made a reasonable service, and not an *opus operatum*, as Romanism, and practically even Tract doctrine (by its admission of cold

confessors of the church's creed) would teach; and on the other, by the aid of clear deduction from the Scriptures, being rescued from the *status* of a mere emblem, it is equally guarded from Socinian error, and made an undoubted means of grace. And if there be circumstances, leaving out the administration of the word, under which the Holy Ghost may especially be expected to impart his power and life, though He is not absolutely confined to the word, or ordinances, or Sacraments, it is when true penitent believers meet to partake of the Lord's Supper. Methodism has fully acknowledged this in Charles Wesley's Sacramental Hymns, which, on account of their devotional beauty, I here beg leave to quote.

“ Now Saviour now thyself reveal,
And make thy nature known ;
Affix thy blessed Spirit's seal,
And stamp us for thine own.

The tokens of thy dying love,
Let us herewith receive ;
And feel the quick'ning Spirit move,
And sensibly believe.

The cup of blessing bless'd by thee,
Let it thy blood impart ;
The bread thy mystic body be,
And cheer each languid heart.

The grace which sure salvation brings,
Let us herewith receive,
Sate the hungry with good things,
The hidden manna give.”

Hymn Book, No. 549.

And again, in the Hymn which follows :—

“ Come Holy Ghost thine influence shed,
And realise the sign ;
Thy life infuse into the bread,
Thy power into the wine.

Effectual let the tokens prove,
And, made by heavenly art,
Fit channels to convey thy love
To every faithful heart."

With regard to the posture of communicants, it appears to me that kneeling best befits the condition of a sinner. If the Lord's Supper be nothing but a feast, the bread and wine being merely memorials of Christ's death, and tokens of mutual fellowship, then sitting in such a case would be the most natural position; but, if it be a covenant action, and a mean of grace, then kneeling is most truly expressive of the humility and adoration with which it is proper to suppose the soul is actuated. Even if the Apostles sat (which they did not, but reclined), it would be assuming too much that the ordinary members of Christ's church, to the end of time, should be allowed the same sacred familiarity with their Lord, as was allowed in the days of his earthly ministry to those who were appointed to "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Herbert says, in his "Country Parson," that "he that sitteth puts up to an apostle," which expression, quaint as it is, is sufficiently true to rebuke the irreverent and familiar sitter; though far be it from me to believe that sitting, in the case of a humble, prayerful and believing Christian, would impair the ordinance.

With regard to frequency of communion, Christian wisdom has principally to decide how far the oft recurrence of the Sacrament is consistent on the one hand with its reverent administration and reception, and on the other, with a proper observance of those other Christian ordinances which are binding upon the Church

by the same authority. Both sacraments, in the case of adults, require a prepared state of mind, and hence there should be an interval of time in which to seek that preparation. In the primitive times, the churches appear to have held weekly communion, but then their other ordinances appear to have been simple and few. Now, however, when so many thousands require instruction and edification by the word, when Sabbath schools have to be tended, and various designs tending to the conversion of the world, have to be promoted; monthly communion is found best to secure all the points of Christian order, though in large churches, in which not more than a third or fourth part of the members could approach the Lord's table at one service, then, the appointment of a weekly sacrament would be a truly Scriptural and advantageous arrangement. With regard to its obligation upon professing Christians, I would observe, that whatever methods, for the sake of convenience, may be adopted by Christian churches to signify their members, as that for instance of the ticket by the Methodists, there cannot be a doubt but that the communion is a Scriptural test *sine qua non* of church membership, and indeed it is beautifully adapted to express all those hallowed feelings which a candidate for admission is supposed to cherish. It is confessing Christ before men, submitting to his yoke, bearing his reproach, yielding to his authority, soliciting brotherhood with his people, trusting to his blood, abandoning the world, and anticipating his glorious kingdom. If individuals are found, who, through ignorance or thoughtlessness, or superstitious terror, neglect this sacred ordinance, then they are to be admonished and

better instructed ; but if their neglect after this shall be founded on positive apathy, then that church cannot be guiltless, if, by any kind of document or token it retains such members within her pale. As far as Methodism, however, is concerned, I would never so state this as to imply the non necessity of class meetings ; for regarding them as *actuating* Christian fellowship, they are as Scripturally enjoined as the Sacraments ; and reviewing the infinite benefits which they have brought to tens of thousands who have died in the Lord as well as to believers still living ; I would rather have this hand withered for ever, than allow it adversely to touch one of these sacred means, or even touch a law which makes it obligatory upon every member of the Church to attend them.

And now, in concluding this letter, I must again maintain, that it is only by holding the views herein advocated, (however unworthily) that we are saved from Socinian error on the one hand, and papalizing superstition on the other. We are forbidden to enquire into the *modus existendi* of divine things, though bound always to examine what revealed truths stand connected with them. The more the heart is engaged through all its affections, the less disposition then will be thus curiously to pry into veiled realities. Chrysostom and the men of his school, in their rhetorical and glowing style, may describe the eucharistic scene as attended by angels and archangels, and bowing before the consecrated elements, and may enhance thereby the sacerdotal dignity of the administrator until he appears no longer human,* but

* Chrysostom De Sacerdotio.

the faith of the true spiritual believer is much more simple and sublime. The heart is so occupied with that great Atonement for sin, which is here exhibited, and so full of an adoring recognition of Him who "was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich," that it cannot lavish its emotions upon saints and angels, or upon the dignity of the officiating minister, or even upon the supposed parallel of Elijah's sacrifice. The true glory of God, if, for a moment, we may adopt somewhat of their mode of speaking, shines so intensely from the mercy seat, as to absorb the gaze, and leave neither thought nor heart for the cherubim, the twined linen curtain, and the priest.

The table of the Lord is so open, that the most wretched and guilty man may approach it, if he be broken in spirit and consciously condemned through the application of the law of God to the conscience; and yet, from its divine institution and covenant character, it is so surrounded with real sacredness, that every irreverent and presumptuous communicant, and every ungodly administrator, is undoubtedly guilty of Nadab and Abihu's sin, though he may not receive their punishment.

With me, I doubt not you have admired the demeanour of Fletcher at the last sacrament which he administered. Sinking under a deadly sickness, as he approached the communion table, he said, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim," alluding not to attendant angels as in the case just mentioned, but to the position of the believing suppliant for mercy under the

Old Testament. How far above the most elaborate Liturgy is this, in expressing the depth of humility in connexion with the majesty of faith?

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

The Administration of the Word.

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING endeavoured to assign to the Sacraments their proper position in the economy of grace, we turn now to that great ordinance which God has instituted supreme above all others, for the regeneration and salvation of the world. According to Tractarian principles, however, this ordinance is subordinate and not supreme; and indeed, by some writers of this school, is regarded only “as an adjunct of the Church’s divine system, than as a leading feature of it.”*

In opposition to these views, the Scriptures are full and clear. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Rom. x. 17. This is the origination of all, even the lowest degree of true religion. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” Ja. i. 18. “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

* Oakley’s Sermon on Coloss. ii. 10. See also Tracts, vol. i. pref., and even the Bishop of Exeter’s Charge, 1842, p. 8, 9, and 10.

Being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter i. 22, 23.* Thus regeneration is realized. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you." John xv. 3. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." John xvii. 17. Thus sanctification results from the same source. "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the gospel unto Abraham." Gal. iii. 8, and this Abraham "received the sign of circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also." Rom. iv. 11. Our Anglicanism, it is true, asserts, in opposition to Bishop Jewell, that circumcision is not a sacrament, or sacramental; but as this assertion is founded upon the assumption that it is essential to a sacrament to convey the grace it signifies, there is nothing in this to weaken the full force of the lesson before us, which lesson is that Abraham was pardoned or justified through the preaching unto him of the word of God and his faith therein. When St. Paul declared that the gospel was "the power of God unto salvation," he meant, as the context abundantly testifies, the truth of the gospel, as distinct from its ritual—the truth energized by the Spirit.

* Whatever may be the metaphor in the text—whether our Lord's parable of the seed and sower is referred to, or the process of natural production—yet the word of God, which is the preached gospel, is the causative Regenerator. The word of God, I say, understanding by it the preaching of the gospel, not the ritual of the gospel, exactly as in Eph. v. 26, in which last passage the water and the word are clearly distinguished from each other.

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” 1 Cor. i. 21. Thus we derive the salvation of the Gentiles. “Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it with the washing of water by the word.” Eph. v. 26. Thus the efficacy of baptism itself depends upon the word; and if, as is allowed on all hands, faith is a pre-requisite to a participation of the Eucharist, and if that faith is realized in the way spoken of by the Apostle Paul, then the word is as much concerned indirectly in giving effect unto this sacrament, as unto the other; and St. Paul, in expressing his own views as to the relative importance of the sacred ordinances, has comprehended them in that one sentence, “Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel,” 1 Cor. i. 17. implying therein his inspired belief that the latter mentioned was the greater work. Tractarian writers regard this ordinance simply as the conveyance of objective truth, and call it by the name of tradition, using that term in its original and general sense, thereby to sanctify their own views of tradition; but by making it of no higher use than to present clear doctrine to the understanding, they fall into the very same error which they charge upon Zuinglians and Socinians, in reference to the Sacraments; retaining the outward form of the ordinance but not looking for its divine efficacy. Preaching, unquestionably, is the conveyance of the truth, but when it is the truth indeed, that is to say, the line of doctrine which runs through the discourses of our Lord, and the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles, and which was solemnly given in trust to the succeeding Church, it is then truth made vital, imbued and pervaded by the Holy Ghost.

The publication of the gospel is not like the gleam of twilight, light without energy, which seems rather to hush than to arouse, it is rather like the electric flame which "lighteneth out of the one part under heaven," and "shineth under the other part under heaven," Luke xvii. 24, putting the whole expanse in motion. Fire has been the expressive emblem of God's word from the beginning. Christ came to bring fire upon the earth, and how earnestly he desired that it might be kindled! a desire which was not repressed by the anticipation of the sacrificial death which he must needs submit to, as the price of that infinite boon. Luke xii. 49.

Our villages are full of ignorant and ungodly peasantry, our large towns teem with a labouring population in a state of practical heathenism, as little acquainted with the house of God, and with his spiritual worship, as Hindoos; our factories pour forth their thousands of corrupted youth, who are training for a still more corrupted riper age: and so little is the heart and mind of the people at large preoccupied by true religion, that infidelity can always number its votaries by tens of thousands. Thus the country is filled with ruined, though immortal mind, the more ruined and ruinous because immortal, and what can stir amid this mass of spiritual desolation but an energy which itself is spirit, and which in action is like fire, pouring light, imparting heat, seizing on every thing contrary to its own nature, permeating its very substance, testing every thing, and reducing it to its own standard, rapidly communicating from object to object, purifying all from alloy and dross, and making all contribute to the burning? What can convince and subdue an idolatrous world, which has

long been crying to its inexorable Baal, notwithstanding its unmitigating woes, but the descent of mighty flame, at once the emblem of an Elijah's ministry and the answer to his prayer?

Such is the Scriptural account of the operation and progress of the word of God when rightly dispensed; that is, when dispensed by those who are truly called and inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon them this office and ministry, and all the more, if, beyond this, they, like Stephen and Barnabas, are men full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

It is not denied that the Scripture is to be read as a part of the ordinances of God's house. On many accounts it is imperative that a considerable portion of time be devoted to this service. Because it is a volume of pure revelation, replete with truth which the reason of man could never have searched out, and which no other teacher could teach. It should be read to rebuke the folly and pride of those who profess to learn their duty and religion from the fields, the mountains, and the skies; and to keep alive in the public mind a sense of those eternal verities, respecting pardon, holiness, and eternal life, which find no place in the religion of the secular philosopher. It should be read in public assemblies for the benefit of those persons who cannot read for themselves, of which persons there is often a great proportion. It should be read, too, for the purpose of securing the advantage derived from the increased solemnity and intensity of attention on the rest of the Sabbath day; and lastly, it should be read, that on the one hand, it may present to the holy soul its proper food in its simplest and strongest form, and, that haply, in the case

of some sinner or ignorant person, it may produce similar effects to those which were produced when it was read before King Josiah, who, struck with the conviction of his nation's guilt, rent his clothes and retired to weep and pray. Yet, still the mere reading of Scripture, important and inestimable an ordinance as it is, does not come up to the Scripture idea of preaching the word, and that there was a difference between the two is seen in the practice of the Apostles. The harmony of Scripture truth requires to be exhibited, and Scripture principles require to be directed to the individual case of application. All the positions of the Apostle Peter's first sermon were taken from the Old Testament; but the Apostle *himself* was wanted to draw from them that overwhelming appeal which subdued and converted the multitudes. So necessary in the order of God is the preacher.

Besides, it is manifest from St. Paul, that human affection and sympathy are employed in this ordinance. "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," he said, "we persuade men," 2 Cor. v. 11, "the love of Christ constraineth us," v. xiv., "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation." v. xviii. The expressions shew that the Apostle considered a personal experience of the terrors of the Lord arising from an application of his law to the conscience, as being absolutely requisite, in order to persuade men.

To assert that a man might know the terrors of the Lord without personal and spiritual experience, is absurd; true, he might know any given physical or mathematical truth without emotion, but to know the

terrors of the Lord, means, to feel or to have felt those terrors. He lays stress, likewise, on the constraining influence of the love of Christ, and on the fact that he and his colleagues, the first preachers of the gospel, were themselves reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, and, therefore, came to their work with all the gratitude of newly found pardon, and with all the devotion of those who were solemnly, and for ever, bound to the Redeemer's cause.

It clearly appears, then, that in the ordinance of preaching the word, the Holy Ghost makes use of human affections, such as pity, sorrow, fear, desire and love, in their various degrees of fervour in the soul of a preacher, as a medium through which his saving influence is conveyed to the people. If He has been pleased to make water, and bread and wine, to be signs of the blessings of His covenant, and means, through receiving which, they are often conveyed; is it an incredible thing that He should make use of spirit,—human spirit in His ordinary sanctifying and regenerating operations? There is an infinite difference between the spirit of the preacher and the Spirit that is upon the preacher, or given to him, even if he has attained to ever so high degrees of the grace of the gospel; just as there is an analagous difference between the visible elements of the sacraments, and the grace they signify: in the former case it is the difference between God and man; yet, by divine appointment, the passions of the sanctified human soul become a medium of blessing to surrounding hearers. There is here a fitness and congruity in the appointment, which human nature cannot help but feel. It is Spirit appealing to spirit. The whole soul is invaded by gospel influence,

there is the influence of truth upon the understanding, and that of constraining fervour upon the affections, so that under such circumstances, "if the gospel be *still* hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

Romanism and its modern sister may well be anxious to depress this ordinance into a subordinate place in the Christian economy of public worship; for the admission of the supremacy of the word, as a mean of grace would interfere with their doctrine of the sacraments; and besides, it is necessary to their theory of the Apostolical succession, that ungodly men, if episcopally ordained, are as much ministers of Christ as the holiest. It is, therefore, seen, that if to preach the word of God, in other words, to proclaim the gospel to the world, with a compassionate and regenerated heart and holy affections, be a leading characteristic of a minister of Christ, there are thousands of that school who cannot possibly lay claim to such a character; and who are living only to contravene the purposes of their ordination, and to do that which any moderately gifted individual might do, discharge the functions of a merely ritual service. That evangelical preaching is the leading function of the Christian ministry is evident from the whole scope of the New Testament. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is a record of the progress and triumphs of the word of God, while the epistles are employed to record its concluding doctrines, and to direct its promulgation in the world, laying down at the same time, principles of church order, for the alone sake of gathering and guarding its fruits, and laying them up unto life eternal. The Apostolic command to "preach the word," to be "in season and out of season;" reprove, exhort with

all long suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim iv. 2, is not a command merely to the missionary who dispenses the gospel to the heathen, or to a newly converted church; but to the established pastor, as directing him to the means of edifying his people in faith and holiness. Christ gave to the Church various ministers, not merely to administer sacraments, but "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for edifying the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him, in all things which is the Head, even Christ." Eph. iv. 12 to 15. The unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, and growing into Christ in all things, are blessings not communicated by sacraments, but by the publication of the truth, in intimate connexion with the hallowed unction of the Holy One. How, we ask again, is the case of the ungodly world to be reached, but by this evangelical ministry of power and of the Holy Ghost? A great part of the population of cities are not within the sphere of the word, and in ordinary circumstances, they can only be brought within it by the medium of those who are awakened and converted by its efficacy. The fire must be kindled in order that it may spread.

The Tractarian minister may deliver his cold homily, however learned it may be in structure, and chaste in style, and as he expects no influence, none ordinarily

will attend ; as he employs no vital desire and hope in reference to a present result, no channel is offered for the Spirit's operations beyond that which is afforded by common words on common occasions, and thus spiritual death reigns undisturbed. He is like the unbelieving disciples who could not cast the unclean spirit out. God can at any time when he puts forth his mighty power, and in any way, make dry bones live ; but in doing this he usually chooses as his instrument the impassioned prophet. How the history of the church bears out the truth of this ! It is not for me to pronounce presumptuously upon the eternal state of those men whose ministerial lives were chiefly spent in adorning and promulgating a ritual system. They have gone to a just judge.

But the Scripture has poured its most glorious light upon the destiny of such men as Latimer, Ridley, Baxter, Wesley, Whitfield, Fletcher, Benson, Venn, Grimshaw ; revealing the distinct and established connexion between their labour and reward. " They that be wise (LXX. teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Danl. xii. 3.

There is such a stream of triumphant truth on this subject running through the whole of God's revelations, that neither Romanist nor Tractarian has ventured directly to impugn it. Both schools have quietly and parenthetically admitted that to preach the Gospel is a duty and privilege, and then, as though they had said nothing, have endeavoured to build up a system of externalism in which Sacraments have been all in all. They have not in all cases opposed the supremacy of

the word of God in theory, but have always denied it in practice ; the interior of the church has been adorned with spiritless appeals to the affections, while the living world has moved on to perdition.

But whilst we are guarded against the paralyzing tendency of Ultra High Church views on this subject, we must be reminded on the other hand, that evangelical communities have not always been faithful to improve this ordinance themselves as they were bound to do. Where high predestinarian views have prevailed, and opinions commonly called Calvinistic, though originally Augustinian, the worshipper has generally listened to the preacher as sent to minister to his own selfish comforts as a child of grace, without once breathing forth a prayer to God that while the word is being dispensed, the Holy Spirit may be given to the people, in order to their being awakened, made contrite and pardoned ; while on the other hand, the untaught Methodist whose warm heart has yearned with desire that sinners may be saved, has sometimes neglected to receive with humbled and reverent attention that engrafted word which is able to save, in the fullest sense, his own soul, and without which he can neither be armed against temptation, established in peace, or made eminent and steadfast in holiness.

The great grace of this ordinance, and that which gives it all its efficacy, is the unction of the Holy One, that peculiar power from above by which the mind of the preacher is enlarged, illuminated, sanctified, impassioned, by which his words have imparted to them an irresistible authority,—a power likewise by which the congregation is overawed, arrested, and overwhelmed.

It may come with the son of thunder, or the son of consolation ; with Paul or Apollos, with the whirlwind, as to Job, the fire, as to Moses, or the still small voice, as to Elijah, with energy, or with a softness that may be resisted,—but in all cases it is the soul of the word. The converted preacher is the instrumental medium, and to form that medium to its true perfection, all the powers of the regenerated man are made to join : it may be extemporaneously spoken, or on some occasions written, but it must be the labour of his own soul, the transcript of his understanding and affections, expressing God's holy eternal and authoritative truth, in intimate connexion with his own compassionate yearnings.

If such effects as have been described are, however, in the Scriptures attributed to preaching, it cannot be too strongly inculcated, that the preaching of the word, (using the term word emphatically,) is intended ; that is, there must be a clear deduction of the mind of the Holy Ghost from the Scripture, and then a solemn and powerful application of it to the persons to whom it professes to apply. If every human being were placed in the very circumstances in which those were, to whom the words of Scripture were first addressed, then the use of the words of Scripture would be the best and highest kind of preaching ; and no better a sermon could be delivered than to read with a devout and believing heart the chapter as it stands ; but because the circumstances of men differ, and because their minds are everywhere differently constituted, the author of salvation has ordained that men should be raised up, and in fact has raised them, to declare his revealed mind and will in such variety of mode and illustration, that all the differ-

ences in human minds and circumstances should be provided for, and that the gospel should come to every creature.

Still the preacher's great work is to unfold the mind of God, not to take some text and make it the motto of an essay of his own, not to lay hold of some figurative passage, and make it the basis of a scheme of doctrine which is brought to the subject rather than out of it, not, in a word, to use the sacred text in the way of accommodation.

This is one of the worst principles of rationalism, and lies at the root of semi-infidel doctrines of German theology. Has not the Socinian commentator, or the rationalist Professor, as much right to regard the words of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, as an accommodation to Jewish prejudices, and thereby explain away to nothing all the sacerdotal and sacrificial images therein, as the Christian preacher has to accommodate the Scripture to any purpose *he* may have in view? Whether his doctrine be right or wrong in itself, it is wrongly founded, and therefore destitute, if right, of its proper authority. When he is no longer an expositor he is a speculatist. Let the preacher obviously neglect to give the mind of the Spirit as contained in the passage from which he preaches, and he has no more claim upon the hearer's attention and deference, save in the reverential demeanour which is always due in God's ordinances, than a mere secular lecturer, who lectures upon an ethical or philosophical subject. He has no authority. But let him enter into the depth of Scripture meaning, and derive the very heart and substance of his sermon from the revealed truth which he finds there, and then

he is invested with the authority that the Spirit gives, and utters every word with a power and decision, which indicate the message is from heaven.

In doing this he is doubtless at liberty to follow an analytical or synthetic course, as the necessity of the case may require. The former, as when in opening Rom. viii. 1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," he enters into an exact definition of the separate terms contained in this statement, in order to find out the nature of this blessed privilege of which it speaks: and the latter, as when considering this passage, "Thy Spirit is good," he searches into the whole of Scripture for instances of the Holy Spirit's goodness, whether indicated in creation or redemption, under the law or gospel, veiled in emblem or imparted in reality, pointed out in varied operation, or tested in personal experience; and thus brings all the scattered rays of illumination into one focus of light, to set the goodness (benevolence) of the Spirit in its true and proper glory, and to evolve the full sense of the text in the most impressive manner.* Other modes may in like manner be used by different preachers to elicit the mind of God in the Scripture, accordingly as their minds are originally constituted; and in this respect, at least, evangelical preachers stand on a parallel with the inspired preachers of old times, whose individual peculiarities were never merged, but

* Jackson's Life of Watson, p. 583. In which is found a most interesting sketch of the last discourse, preached by that great man from the above passage.

rather made subservient, in order to give more native force and energy to the divine message which they delivered. And, invaluable as are theological schools and colleges in general, they cannot but be regarded as capable of being hurtful in one respect: if ever their system of training has the effect of reducing the students to one mould, destroying the native peculiarities of their minds, and subduing that originality of thought which makes truth from each man's lips to assume its only true and faithful expression. Next to the possession of divine unction, the Christian preacher's highest excellency lies in his being an expositor; for no preaching is according to the will of God, nor adapted to the wants of man, nor blessed by the Spirit's influence, which is not grounded upon solid exposition; nor does any other kind answer to the Scriptural idea of this ordinance. Not that I mean a sermon should be a running commentary, but that its great truths should be drawn clearly and immediately from that portion of the word on which it discourses, and that the truths of the text are only put into another form, and its leading theme variously illustrated, in order to convey its whole meaning and spirit into the understandings and affections of the many around.

In order to gain this excellency there can be no doubt but works like Ernesti's Institutes, Horne's Introduction, Poole's Synopsis, Pearson on the Creed, and a hundred others, and all learned labourers in biblical criticism and interpretation are in a very high degree valuable, and to a certain extent indispensable. The greatness and importance of the end require diligence and labour in the use of the means.

I make no doubt but you, dear sir, agree with me, that preachers' manuals, and rules for sermonizing, can never effectually aid an evangelical preacher; and often serve but to divert his mind from nobler studies, and to do worse than consume the time which ought to be devoted to them. I have a very strong conviction of the useless and even hurtful character of these publications, and as I believe so I speak. Let the preacher study the word of God, and invest himself as a public pastor of the church with its awful authority, and direct his reading and meditations to this end, let him go deep into its divine doctrines, and then let him bring out in his own natural and original manner the truth which he has elicited from it, though at the same time with all the advantages of learned aid which education may have given him, and he will be such a preacher as no manual could ever make him. A manual in general, teaches nothing but how to multiply topics, and to draw out the imagery and words of Scripture until the spirit is lost. It is not intended hereby to decry the noble studies of the rhetorician and logician, but rather those feeble productions, the most proper title of which would be "Preaching made easy." Preaching the word of God is not easy, it is arduous and difficult in proportion as it is paramount in the system of means for evangelizing the world? it requires biblical knowledge, acquaintance with the human heart, a familiarity with controversies, treasures of experience, and above all, lips purged with living fire taken from the altar in the temple of heaven.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours as ever,

LETTER XII.

The Ministration of the Word.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHILE treating of the ministry of the word, we are encountered both by the Ultra High Church and Romanist objector, who ask us for our standard of interpretation, and who both so far agree with each other in opposition to the views which are here maintained, as strenuously to deny the right of private judgment; and to assert that every anxious and enquiring mind must submit to be quieted by the authority of the Church. The phrase, private judgment, as used by both of them, is somewhat indefinite, but on this account, it is perhaps better adapted to a mysterious and transcendental theology.

If, by asserting the right of private judgment, an individual were to mean, that he had a right to follow those views of Scripture which were suggested by his own random and unassisted meditations, and that, that was actually truth to him, which, under such circumstances, appeared to be truth, then there is not in evangelical religion a feeling but what would start away from such a position. But, if the right of private judgment simply means a right to use not only our own

understanding, but all the aids which learning, piety, and antiquity, have given us, in order to arrive at a true knowledge of the divine will, and humbly to maintain the correctness of the views so acquired, then to deny it, is to deny that God will judge the world in righteousness. Private judgment must be employed in selecting the best and purest sources of exposition of divine truth; and on such an important subject, employed too, in seeking for all available aids, or how can our judgment be judged, which it must be, if the secrets of all hearts are finally to be made manifest? We deny not but that education and local circumstances may influence us, in some degree; the ancient heathen had so involved themselves in the gloomy haze of their philosophy, that they could not perceive the light of gospel truth, when it was poured upon the world by the preaching of the Apostles, though that cloud would often be gorgeously fringed with refractions of the light against which it struggled. This, it could be shewn, arose from their moral enmity to the truth: but we are not now contemplating a case like this, but rather the case of good men with devout minds, having the Bible before them, and anxious, above all things, to know its meaning, so as to become wise unto salvation themselves, and the instruments of making others so. There is a method of rising above the clouds and storms of controversy, and gaining the clear air of religious truth,* though at the same time, those who have found their way thither, will, perhaps, for ever in this world differ from each other as to whether they have

* Lord Bacon's Essay on Truth.

found all the truth. We are told that the different Christian sects, with the same truth before them, arrive at different conclusions, and that exposition is one thing with one preacher, and another thing with another. In answer to this, it would be easy to shew, that, previous to the Reformation, there was as wide a diversity on many subjects of Christianity, as there is now, and if the diversity was not so great on all points, the existence of ignorance and worldly despotism in the Church might be quite sufficient to account for the fact, without any other theory : and, although both our opponents appeal to tradition, the one, to tradition as limited by the first four centuries, and the other, to tradition extended as the occasion may require, yet, neither can present us with a simple uniform and complete system of Scriptural interpretation, producing unvarying unity of doctrine. The Anglican deems that it required three centuries or more for the doctrine and ritual of the Church to develop itself in,—the other, by carrying a little farther the same principle, adds as many centuries as he pleases, and brings into his tradition the writers of the middle as well of the primitive age. As far as the evangelical communions of the present day are regarded as holding the catholic truths of the four first councils, or indeed, the doctrines of what is called the Apostles' creed, their unity is more complete and intelligent than ever it was before, and as far as they differ from each other, the grounds of difference will be found to arise rather from matters undetermined by Scripture, and from giving various degrees of prominence to particular truths, than from conflicting views of doctrine. The point turns between the evangelical Arminian and the Calvinist, on

a metaphysical distinction, the point between them both and the Methodist, as far as regards belief, turns on their generalizing and keeping out of view the doctrines of the direct witness of the Spirit and entire holiness ; while he (the latter) gives them a special prominence, and as regards externals, the difference relates to the principles of church government, and the nature of the pastoral office. The difference between them all and the evangelical clergy, is chiefly of this last kind. The Socinian community has hardly an existence. Fanatical sects, like bubbles on the wave, break and disappear as rapidly as they rise. Only truth lives, truth as it has survived the wreck of ages, and the elaborate phantasies of erring men. And yet, united as all evangelical Christians of the present day are, on those points, which, from the beginning, have been accounted catholic ; and, consequently, so far united in their views of Scripture, and their mode of preaching the gospel of Christ, yet, it is not pretended but that their unity in the minuter matters of faith might be rendered more complete. There is an infallible rule which the Bible itself has given on this subject, which has been too much neglected by those even who have admitted its authority. *The Bible contains the key to its own truths.* “No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation,” that is, is self interpretative, says the Apostle St. Peter, as Bishop Horsley understands him. The whole must explain the part, the context and parallel places must interpret the text. It is as true in unfolding the meaning of Scripture as it is that of providence, that

“God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.”

And if Protestant Christians had so far laid aside pride and passion, as honestly and at all risks to follow this rule, a brighter day had dawned on the churches.

In order to preserve the figment of authoritative tradition, the defenders of Popery and ultra High Church doctrine have brandished as a weapon against all non-conforming Protestant communities, the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, and laid it down as an axiom, that catholic truth is that which has been taught always, everywhere, and by all. Yet this giant sword, when wielded by another hand, may haply fall like Goliath's upon the neck of its wearer. The rule as applied by Papistical and Tractist teachers has reference to the writings and teachings of the theological authors of the Christian Church, who, taken singly, are fallible and uninspired men.

Our opponents have asserted that they appeal to the doctrines held by the fathers, not as matters of opinion, but as matters of fact; still these doctrines are only asserted matters of fact, gathered by laborious collection, from partial resources, and have often been, and are still questioned, and not only questioned, but sometimes denied. We say nothing, then, of the immense difficulty of tracing out the application of the rule as far as it applies to these uninspired men, which difficulty is itself an insuperable objection to its authority, and quite opposed to God's method of teaching, and quite unsuited to the necessities of the general portion of mankind: let it be applied to inspired and infallible writers, and let us seek among them, in all ages, for *quod semper quod ubique et quod ab omnibus*, and we may well be content to

abide by its decisions. And is not this actually a more sober and legitimate procedure? and are we not as favourably situated for judging respecting the agreement of writers who lived in different ages, and were inspired and kept from error by the Holy Ghost, as we are for judging respecting writers who lived in one age, or nearly so, who are confessed to have no such privilege, and who often are fanciful to the last degree?

The rule of Vincentius, then, shall be our canon of interpretation, and shall lead the way to that authoritative exposition on which we place such stress; only, instead of applying it to erring men, it shall apply to those "holy men of old," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Our application of the rule is in fact a proceeding positively directed by the Scripture itself; for when, in the passage just alluded to, St. Peter says that no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation, *ἰδιῶς ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται*, and that the "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man," the disjunctive conjunction "*ἀλλὰ* but" refers us to the explanation of the whole case. To assert that no single passage of the Scripture is to be taken as explaining itself, appears at first sight to be throwing a difficulty in the way of a Christian learner; but the Apostle immediately refers to holy men of old, all of whom were inspired, clearly shewing that he intended them to be compared together, and their consent placed against the individual "will of man;" and whether the Apostle uses the word *προφητεία* in the sense of predictive scripture or general scripture, the rule will equally apply.* And

* Rosenmuller. "Nullum vaticinium ex se et per se explicari posse nisi vaticinium et eventus secum et invicem comparentur, neque potest intelligi nisi ex eventu et historia,

when we regard the inspired fathers as spread over a period of four thousand years, and all acting and thinking separately, the case is as complete as divine Providence can make it.

Let it be applied, in the first place, to the doctrine of the Trinity. Moses, in one age, darkly announces the mystery: "And the Elohim said, let us make man in our image," Gen. i. 26; and again connecting the plurality of persons with the unity of divine essence, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah," Deut. vi. 4. Then Isaiah the prophet appears to limit the plurality of persons to three, when he speaks of the trinal acclamations of the seraphim in the temple; and when the prophet is regarded as referring to the Father under the title of the Lord of Hosts (Isaiah vi. 3), it appears from the testimony of after writers, that the other ever-blessed Persons were actually present in that scene. St. John declares that the glory which Isaiah saw, was the glory of Christ, (John xii. 41); and Paul, preaching to the Jews at Rome, declared, in reference to the same vision, that the words spoken were the words of the Holy Ghost. Acts xxviii. 25. Thus the whole doctrine is developed; and when it is farther connected with the baptismal formula appointed by our Lord, and the apostolic form of benediction used by St. Paul, in which the several names of the blessed Three are mentioned, and with the various passages in which the attributes, titles, and acts of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, are stated, it is guarded from Socinian error to the end of time. That foul heresy cannot stand the test of this comparison of Scripture with Scripture for a moment: therefore, it has recklessly denied the

canonicity of some books, and as recklessly translated the words of those which it has reluctantly allowed to remain as authoritative. The heresy does not fall, from the testimony of one witness, but from the united college of Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles. Let the rule be applied to the doctrines connected with the person of our Lord.

When Isaiah terms our Lord "the mighty God," Isa. ix. 6, and St. John, "God" emphatically, John i. 1, and again, the "true God," 1 John v. 20, and again, St. Paul, "the great God and our Saviour," Tit. ii. 13; and that, according to his divine nature, as opposed to his nature according to the flesh, he was "the Son of God," Rom. i. 3: we have the doctrine of our Lord's true and proper divinity, together with the relation of his person to that of the Father, embodied by the Nicene Council, in these words, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ—the parallel, in fact, of "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. and thus falls the Arian heresy.

Again, taking the original promise of salvation made in paradise, recorded by Moses, that the "seed of the woman" should bruise the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15, connecting it with the account of the incarnation by the evangelists, with the declaration of St. John in particular, that "the Word was made flesh," John i. 3, and with Paul's solemn assertion in Heb. ii. and xiv., that he took part of flesh and blood, and was made in all things like his brethren; so falls the Apollinarian heresy, which impugned the perfection of our Lord's human nature, and denied that together with flesh, he had a rational soul, affirming that the Word was to him in place of a soul.

Again, when we learn from Christ that he was before Abraham, John viii. 58, and yet, from the Evangelist Matthew i. 25, that he was born of the Virgin: when St. Peter declares that he preached in the days of Noah, and the gospel says that he preached in the days of Tiberius: that St. Paul says he was “of the fathers as concerning the flesh,” and yet, “God over all blessed for ever,” Rom. ix. 5; when human and divine titles are given Him interchangeably, one inspired writer terming him “God,” John i. 1, another, “man,” Heb. x. 12, and then “Immanuel,” Isa. vii. 14, implying both; another “redeeming kinsman,” Gen. lvi. 16, Job xix. 25, an office together with that of “High Priest of our profession,” requiring both; when actions and affections that cannot come from the same nature, are nevertheless asserted of the same person,—as that of God purchasing the Church with his own blood,—then we must confess the divine and human natures mysteriously and indivisibly united, and thus falls the heresy of Nestorius, who, as Hooker says, “rent Christ asunder, and divided him into two portions.”

And yet, once more. As the prophets predicted that Christ should have a body which should die and rise again, and as the evangelists assert, that the body of our Lord did rise from the grave, and ascended to heaven; as St. Paul speaks of his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21, and of his “human sympathies,” Heb. iv. 95; and as the Lord instituted the bread in the sacrament to be the standing emblem of his body to the end of time; and as he appeared in his glorified human nature to John, Rev. i.: we are brought to confess that the two natures in our Lord, though undivided, are distinct; and thus falls the

heresy of Eutyches, who taught that “the properties of the weaker nature had vanished with the more glorious, and had been therein swallowed up as in a gulf.”* On the subject of these heresies, the first four councils of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, were held, and these comprise all the errors of any great moment which have ever arisen on the subject of the person of our Lord.

Let the rule be applied, in the next place, to inquire what has been the view of God’s elect in all ages, as to the method in which a guilty sinner is justified before God?

The Oxford school asserts justification to be “not through the Holy Spirit acting immediately on our minds, but rather by our own particular acts, whether of faith or obedience, prompted, guided, and prospered by him;”† and this, I suppose, is the result of the investigation of Scripture, as interpreted by Jerome, Tertullian, Cyprian, and their contemporaries, (a course which millions of the unlearned cannot take, however proper it might be—an objection this which would be fatal to any mode). We, however, instead of comparing the notes of these fallible, and in many respects superstitious fathers, go to the general consent of inspired witnesses. Moses presents us in his history with the first case of a guilty man accepted and received into the favour of God, namely, that of Abel; and the case, interpreted by the inspired commentator Paul, is, that “by faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice *πλεיוνα θυσιαν*

* Hooker.

† Newman on Justification.

than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Heb. xi. 5. Next we have the case of Abraham, who, it is said, "believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness," and this counting him righteous took place considerably before the time when he received circumcision, the sign and seal, in that dispensation, of God's covenant, and parallel, as we have seen, with baptism in ours, and was a totally distinct transaction, as the Apostle witnesses. (Rom. iv. 11.) David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousness, *without works*. (Rom. iv. 6.) Habakkuk declares "the just shall live by his faith," ch. ii. 4.; a declaration which St. Paul incloses in his own great argument to strengthen it; and the Apostle himself declares, "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, faith is counted to him for righteousness." Rom. iv. 5. And St. James, to shew the character of that faith in its after-working, in writing to professed Christians, says, that, without works, it is dead; and that, as regards another and a manifestative justification, as in the case of Abraham offering up Isaac, who had been pardoned and accepted long before, men enjoyed and held it not by faith only, but by works likewise joined therewith; (James ii. 14—26.) All the writers, but the last, speak of the great privilege, while he who is the last establishes the guard against fanaticism. Thus, then, when we compare Moses, David, Habakkuk, Paul, James, men of all ages, and full of the Unction of the Holy One, we have a beautiful harmony, a true and enlarged catholic consent. Each writer takes his especial view of the subject, and the whole collected, present it in its length

and breadth. Original Sin and Baptism have been discussed already, so that I need not here refer to *them* as doctrines drawn from the collation of inspired fathers. The instances adduced are sufficient. Thus do we arrive at the substantive meaning of Scripture.

With regard to the application of our rule to the interpretation of types, it can regard no person or thing as holding that character unless such person or thing be referred to as a type, directly or indirectly, by inspired authority. When the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness is recognized by our Lord, and the various figures under the law by St. Paul and the other Apostles, then the case is plain. But human fancy is unceremoniously excluded from determining what are types of divine things, and thus is swept away the superstitious rationalism of the fathers, and especially the ancient allegorical system of Origen, and the more modern one of Professor Cocceius. With regard to its application to the elucidation of Old Testament prophecy, together with its frequent twofold references, it requires a careful comparison of the sacred text, with the citation of it by New Testament writers, and of the events and circumstances under which it is said to be fulfilled, tracing the connexion between them, whether it be simple and actual, or typical and figurative, deeming it contrary to the dignity of a divine revelation, that men inspired by the Holy Ghost should use each other's language in the way of accommodation. So far is this from being the case, their collected writings form a vast *catena patrum*. Whenever our rule has been faithfully applied by good men, its results have been uniform. It has ever led them to the same views respecting the ever-blessed

Trinity subsisting in the unity of the Godhead, the Filial relation of the second person to the first, and the relation of the Spirit to both; the fall of man, and the original sinfulness of his nature; the atonement of Christ, justification by faith in his blood, sanctification by the Holy Ghost, which is given as the result of pardon, and as immediately flowing from a persuasion of the divine favour, implying heavenly affections and assimilation to the moral image of the Son of God. Whenever heresy has arisen, it has been vanquished and dispersed by this rule;* and whenever Catholic councils have been held, their decisions have been directed by its authority. Other controversies respecting church order and the externals of Christianity have not come within its application, Scripture having not spoken minutely on the subject.

This view of coming at the substantive meaning of Scripture is quite consistent with the adoption of distinct confessions of faith by protestant and evangelical Christians, and the right which every Christian church has to declare the sense in which it understands the Scripture on the subject of doctrine,—a right expressed by the *potestas dogmatica* of the schoolmen.

Unless there be some awful power provided to coerce

* “What is become of Marcion, of Nestorius, of Valentinus, of Menander, of Sabellius, of Eutyches, and others? They are blown away as smoke before the wind: the word of God hath confounded them, and beat them away.”—Bishop Jewell on Holy Scripture. And again. “We say not that all cases of doubt are by manifest and open words plainly expressed in the Scriptures, for so then they should need no exposition. But we say there is no case in religion so dark and doubtful, but it may necessarily be either proved or reproved by collection and conference of the Scriptures.—Defence of the Apologie, part i, ch. 9.

all human minds into one way of apprehending a subject, then must every Christian community define for itself its deductions from the Scripture.

If it be said that the Church's creed should be brief and comprehensive, as for instance, that called the "Apostles' Creed," and that all opinions not comprehended by it, should be left to mutual charity and forbearance; what would this be in the present imperfect state of human nature but sowing the seed of a thousand schisms? Will men held opinions which are dear to them without seeking to propagate the same? How have Tractists and High Church divines acted with reference to the Articles of the Church of England? No, let the Methodist lay hold of his four volumes of sermons and notes on the New Testament, by Wesley, as the most concise and comprehensive exposition of his views,—as his *traditio exegetica*,—none the less catholic in the true sense, for being Wesleyan, and let him invite to his communion all who think according to that standard. Let the Churchman take the Articles of Cranmer and his contemporaries, and the Homilies of Cranmer's day, on the other hand, as *his* exposition, having reference with the exercise of a careful judgment to the ancient Fathers as well; and let the Independent and the Scottish Presbyterian each take the Assembly's Catechism, as containing his view of the doctrines of the Christian system: there will be found in all of them, whatever is included in the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* of the inspired writers, and yet, not only is provision made for the free and unfettered scope of minor views, but also for the means, when not interfered with by worldly power, of extending truth and holiness.

No arbitrary distinction can be established between truths essential and non-essential to salvation. The Church of England has judged what sacraments in her view, and in opposition to Popery, are necessary to salvation, and so in like manner must each Christian church judge for itself respecting the essential or non-essential character of its doctrines. There is no medium between this and the Protean infallibility of Romanism.

A *via media* so called, is a *misty* path that insensibly tends in the same direction, and at last lands its traveller at the foot of the papal throne.

Standing on this ground just taken, therefore, the evangelical preacher is guarded himself, and guards others against the Popish whirlpool on the one hand, and the Socinian gulf on the other, equally rejecting sacramental justification, and a philosophical tampering with divine mysteries.

The true preacher of the gospel must be invested with authority. Like his great exemplar and Lord, he must speak with authority and not as the scribes. To do this, he will require to make the divine word the food both of his intellectual and spiritual life, to imbibe its holiness, acquire its readiness of decision, and lay himself open to its rich and sanctifying instructions, not doubting but that the more in such a case he receives of the word, so much the more at the same time he obtains of the Spirit. In other words, he must be as was intimated before, a thorough and delighted expositor of Scripture, and must make that exposition the basis of every argument and appeal, or else forfeit the high character of which we have spoken. He must either elicit the mind of the Holy Ghost by careful and patient and devout

meditation, and in his public ministration, simply bring out this result, or every one present will perceive that he is giving form to some creation of his own mind. However gorgeously the latter may be invested, or however it may awaken a momentary rapture or surprise, it has no sovereign claim upon man's understanding or heart; it is no burden of the Lord weighing upon the mind of the preacher and bracing all his powers into holy action; it has no commission from above, even if true; it is imbued with no spirit except man's spirit, and therefore, produces no saving results: and although it may shew somewhat of the majesty of the human intellect, when considered relatively with creatures, yet, O, who would think of exhibiting his greatness in the presence of God? We can all remember, as you, my dear sir, are aware, in our youthful days, our transient excitement and surprise at listening to preachers of the florid and imaginative order, at least imaginative so called, (for I am far from excluding the sanctified imagination from its appropriate office in the Christian ministry,) but compared with this, how incomparably deeper in feeling, and richer in grandeur, has been the impression produced by some honoured servant of Christ, who has simply laboured to make us understand and feel the full import of God's message! Such a man has never appeared more truly exalted in my estimation, than when he has sought to hide himself and glorify his Lord. When the truths of Scripture are taken, and combined, and compared, and applied by a preacher who uses his own peculiar language *only* in order that he may throw into his discourses the hallowed emotions of his own heart, this is teaching as the oracles of God, this is authority,

though it would vanish in a moment, if this divine method were abandoned for the airy flights of fancy, or the discoveries of science; and the moment it is lost the preacher becomes a mere lecturer, and like a lecturer on any subject whose positions and conclusions are all open to debate, may be either believed or controverted, revered, or scorned with perfect indifference.

Lest any should think that this is devising a simple and inglorious way to the pulpit, instead of directing to master the systems of sermonic composition, let them examine the matter attentively, and they will find that this task of exposition requires learning in all its limits, consummate patience, deep thought, and a sanctified heart, with a careful observance of Luther's rule, *Bene precare est bene studere*.

The genius of a Christian, for ought I know, is as great as that of an unbeliever, and in the intellectual world around, might abstract and generalize, and create as well as he; but if the Christian, and especially the Christian preacher, were to venture forth and expatiate without the divine word, he would be attended with the gloomy thought, that this is all pageant which the beck of another being might dissolve. There wants a divinity to give to the whole the sanction of life, of unity and immutability. There is nothing indelibly stamped with moral truth but that which God declares true, consequently, there is no moral authority but from his Holy Spirit, and his Holy Spirit is in his word. On this subject the word is its own witness, "He that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat saith the Lord? * * * * I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words

every one from his neighbour. Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say He saith. And the burden of the Lord shall ye mention no more, for every man's word shall be his burden, for ye have perverted the words of the living God of the Lord of Hosts our God." Jer. xxiii. 28. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm cxix. 89. "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God in the sight of God speak we in Christ." 2 Cor. ii. 17. "Not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Cor. iv. 2.

The upholding a ritual, which shall soothe the senses, and by personal connivance, quiet for a time the heart, is a pleasing employ; but it is like a pleasing dream, it passes by, and a guilty and perishing world is no better. The voice of the Lord, however, as uttered by his evangelical ministers, is "full of majesty," it "breaketh the cedars of Lebanon."

Lest I should weary you with dry hermeneutics, let me, in another form of expression, direct you to one whose name I need not mention, but who, in the early part of the last century, was a living example of the principles advocated in this letter, and who was the chief mover in a great evangelical movement, which, I trust, will be found to connect itself for good with all time and all eternity. Yours as ever,

II.

The church has still her hour of prayer,
Her sons, her shrine, her priestly stole ;
Yet where do vaulted echoes bear
The burden of a pleading soul ?

Her sons, by pastoral vows forsworn,
Yet vows forgot and broken, stray ;
In Mammon's deck'd and tangled bourn,
The flock unfed, their guides away.

In vain the imposing hand and seal,
Where is th' ordaining Spirit nigh ?
When faithless lips the faith conceal,
What sanction stamps the deed on high ?

Where pastoral robes no heart enfold,
To yearn o'er lost and dying men,
Th' insulted truth, as though untold,
Flies back to heaven, to plead again.

Lo ! meek of mind, and firm of heart,
A pastor in the "woeful day" !
Ariseth, as when shadows part,
And riseth morning's melting ray.

In all the sanctioned ways of man,
He early walk with fear and awe ;
Till urged by higher power, and ran,
The servant of a holier law.

Where stately fence no more could guard
From the world's wild, or wolf, or bear,
He leap'd o'er all, in haste to ward
Each torn and struggling victim there.

Nor lamp, nor lore by night, nor grove
By day, can hold whom Christ doth move;
Untir'd as angels aye to rove
Where man is lost, while God is love.

As erst, the Prophet lone and low
Before the temple glory wailed!
When lips were purged with burning glow,
Which Israel never heard but quailed.

So full of light, but free from ire,
That glory rose and stream'd on him!
His spirit burn'd with temple fire,
His lips were touch'd by seraphim!

Saint of thy fourscore years and more!
Oft did thy voice prevent the day!
When winter moons did silvery o'er
Thy own bright pathway shed their ray.

Wise are the men, who deep intent
On things unseen, can dive or soar
From element to element,
In mortal sense or hallowed lore!

Wise are the men, whose mind elate
Can rule the storm of temp'ral strife!
And like a Providence, abate
The struggles of a nation's life!

Wise are the gifted souls within
The place which God delights to bless,
Who purge away the spot or sin,
Which mars its beauteous holiness!

But O! to stand where Christ hath stood !
Mid storms of rebel ruined mind,
And breathe upon the heaving flood
The mandate of his Lord behind !

The herald of the Word doth rise,
Like heav'n, o'er mortal, clouded light ;
The wisdom wherewith he is wise,
Is wisdom in its mightiest might.

LETTER XIII.

On the Ordinance of Prayer.

MY DEAR SIR,

PRAYER is the medium of drawing near to God, and the principal means of communing with him. Our obligation to its exercise rests upon the divine authority. God has absolutely made it to be binding upon us, as the condition upon which the impartation of his benefits is suspended; and though we cannot know all the reasons upon which this requirement is founded, it is obvious that prayer keeps up in all minds a sense of our entire dependence upon God, and therefore, glorifies his *all sufficiency*, and raises up within our hearts devout affections.

Prayer is not opposed to God's immutable purposes; for those immutable purposes have reference to the principles of his government, and not to individual acts which take place under it, and therefore, when he is righteously angry with a sinful man, or a sinful nation, prayer often causes him, as righteously, though in infinite mercy, to turn from his wrath and be gracious to the penitent suppliant at his feet. The history of Moses pleading for idolatrous Israel, and of David pleading for himself, is finely illustrative of this subject. Prayer

moves God; and it was because he knew, that in the covenant of His grace he had made himself liable to be moved, that he said unto Mosès on announcing Israel's guilt, "Now let me alone, that I may consume them in a moment."

Mental prayer must be unceasing, 1 Thess. v. 17, that is, the mind must be habituated to the exercise, in order to our daily walk with God.

The sparks must fly upward. The new born soul must breathe the spirit of dependance for life upon its great Regenerator. A member of the kingdom of heaven, the Christian must be joined to the saints in the common bond of affiance in the love of the Father, and a filial expectancy of continually and according to earnest desires, receiving from Him. Each day likewise brings its returning hours of prayer, and in this case, Christ commands us to enter the closet and shut the door—to exclude the world and not admit any third person. We must here be alone with God, subject to no influence of human sympathy or excitement from without, and are thus to bring the simple and sincere breathings of the heart alone. The closet is an oft repeated pause between the place of duty and trial, and the place of judgment.

But prayer, as far as the church of God is concerned, is public, offered in Christian assemblies by persons who are duly authorised, but chiefly by ministers whose office it is to conduct God's worship. It is to this particular chiefly, that our design leads us to direct attention. In public worship, prayer must be solemn, full and comprehensive,—not only adapted to the spiritual circumstances and wants of the worshippers supposed to be present, but so offered as to include all men, and so as

to refer to the leading events of Providence as they may occur, to the judgments and mercies of the church, with the miseries and requirements of the world. The tendency of evangelical doctrine has been to foster, with regard to public worship, a love for extempore prayer; and it must be conceded that this in many instances, has been carried so far as to promote a deep and unfounded prejudice against all forms of devotion whatever.

Arguments against forms of prayer, merely as forms, meet with very little support from Scripture, as long as our Lord prescribed a form; and that form was not only to serve as a model or basis upon which we were to construct our own prayers, but to contain the very words of expression. In Matth. vi. 9, the Lord's prayer is introduced by his saying, "After this manner pray ye;" but according to Luke xi. 2, our Lord says, "When ye pray, *say*, Our Father, which art in heaven," &c. When one evangelist is interpreted by the other, it is not to be doubted that the use of the very form itself was meant. The Psalms, moreover, are full of regularly composed petitions, the very words of which will be repeated by devout worshippers, as long as the world stands, without ever losing their impressiveness and force. And if it be thought that inspired forms do not warrant the use of uninspired, still it remains to be evinced why previously composed forms of devotion, suited to especial wants and states of mind, should have less of the "spirit of grace and supplication" when used by devout worshippers, than language of their own. If the essence of prayer be in the heart's desire and groaning, then that language which most accurately expresses it is the most proper, and the most likely to carry other

hearts along with it. Besides an absolute objection to liturgies in worship would lie against all forms whatever. Are not the hymns which are sung in Christian assemblies for the most part prayer, though moulded according to the rules of sacred poetry? The hymns of Wesley especially, are neither more nor less than a complete liturgy in verse; and if they were translated into prose, would be found richer in revealed truth and devotional sentiment than many liturgies which are now extant. These valuable compositions are sung over a thousand times, without ever a complaint being raised that they weary and tire out the spiritual taste; and indeed they are not only transferred, as regards their sentiment, but transferred, as regards their actual expressions, into the petitions of the Methodist people, and in those parts of their devotion, too, where they would fain express their most fervent emotions. This is a plain proof that all men, when they can find in pre-composed language a prayer of full, deep, and distinct meaning, will use it as a better outlet for the desires of their hearts, than imperfect and vague expressions would be, which might occur at the moment to themselves. It is impossible to avoid perceiving that a scriptural and devout liturgy, such for instance as that of the Church of England, leads us to pray for numerous blessings which we should not have thought of asking for without its suggestion or aid.

A thousand individuals, who decry forms of prayer in public, will not scruple to use them in their families, where far fewer individuals have to hear them and be benefited by them. These remarks may not generally apply to the prayers of ministers, for they, by reason of

the studious and contemplative character of their piety, will use better than vague and imperfect expressions : and yet, even in the case of ministers, an extemporaneous prayer will not always, (though it happily does in a great number of instances) furnish that comprehensiveness of spiritual vision, and that pleading importunity, exactness, and fulness of expression, which is so much to be desired. The devout worshipper desires to give glory to the ever blessed Three, and to each person according to the office which he bears in the work of redemption, to confess and deplore his transgressions, with a particular enumeration of those which are most prominent ; to plead in the name of Christ for pardon and peace, and for a consciousness of the same, as imparted by the Spirit of adoption, and for all those graces which constitute the perfect holiness of the Christian ; to intercede for the Church and the world, to implore national blessings and deprecate the divine judgments, to pray for all the objects of human sympathy, and the subjects of trial and pain ; to anticipate the solemnities of a coming judgment, and the joys which are at God's right hand, and the glories of eternity ; to deprecate the wrath to come, to sympathize with the faithful in all ages, and with the whole Church in heaven and in earth, in adoring the perfections of the divine nature, and coming into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ; and there is this advantage in a liturgy, it conducts a really prayerful minister and a prayerful congregation from "glory to glory," without any painful tension of mind, but rather "as by the Spirit of the Lord." If it be asserted that the use of pre-composed prayer tends to formality, it must be remembered that a rigid adherence to loose unmeaning and hackneyed

expressions in extempore prayer, tends to formality as well, and formality which is equally baneful to the true life of godliness. Little is it thought, in many quarters, that there is as much formality in setting aside the decorum and awe which belong to divine worship, and attributing spiritual influence solely to the vague and rhapsodical bursts of untaught zeal spurning all control, as there is in coldly listening to the words of a liturgy, without entering into its deep import, and without feeling its impressiveness. Yet, such is the case. Praying without the understanding will be found in but too many cases, to be praying without the Spirit also.

Yet while it is conceded on the one hand, that evangelical Christians have sometimes carried their objections to the use of a liturgy, to a very prejudicial and inconsistent extreme, and while you and I can remember, on various occasions, being humbled before the Divine majesty and drawn out in strong prayer, through the deep and devout emotions which the use of it has occasioned; it must be maintained on the other hand, that the opposite extreme of excluding all extempore prayer, and allowing of nothing in public supplication but precomposed forms, is fraught with far more destructive consequences to vital piety.

In such a case, personal piety and the spirit of prayer in the minister, are practically dispensed with; a loss, this, which is only properly estimated by those who believe with St. Paul, that edification is promoted by the mutual faith of the minister and his people, and who principally feel that want of spirit and unction, which, in such a state of things exist. A liturgy can only be safely and profitably used as a part of public worship,

when it is connected with extempore prayer, and even then it requires antecedently a devout, attentive, and somewhat intelligent congregation to realize all its beauty and its benefits: and when High Church doctrine forbids the use of any prayer but that which is found in the Prayer Book, then the paralyzing tendency of such a restriction is great in proportion. How will this restriction accord with the principles of New Testament Scripture? The first conviction deduced from those principles, is, that the prohibition of extempore prayer in public, directly frustrates that office of the Holy Ghost by which "he helps our infirmities."

Seeing, that without His help, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought," Rom. i. 26, we are directed to expect in the exercise of this duty, an unwonted movement of the mind heavenward, together with the suggestion of appropriate petitions, and above all, an earnest breathing after spiritual blessings, and a taking hold of his strength in order to "make peace" with him; Isa. xxvii. 5, which is the sure result of that intercession that He makes within us, "with groanings that cannot be uttered."

A form of prayer may certainly be composed under the influence of the Spirit's gracious assistance, and may be devoutly and believingly uttered, so as to secure a gracious unction upon the worshippers assembled: but still the range of the thought and the objects of desire are limited, they cannot go beyond the words of the petition. There is no room to plead with humble importunity for any given blessing, and no room for that expansion of the heart, and elevation of faith which springs under special divine influence from reiterating

though in different form, and like the *Syrophœnician woman* (so much commended on this very point by our Lord) the same petition, knowing, that when we ask according to his will we ought to be restless till our prayer is granted. And can it for a moment be arbitrarily asserted that the help of the Holy Ghost, spoken of in Rom. viii. 26, making up for our ignorance in not knowing what to ask, is to be confined to private prayer? By what authority is this rule of exposition confirmed? Was not extempore prayer used in the primitive Church? Did not the disciples pray thus, when after our Lord's resurrection, they waited for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of him? Acts i. 4. There was no existing form at the time suited to that subject. Is it agreeable to the tenor of divine revelation, and to what is recorded of the practice of holy men in public stations, that the "free spirit" should intend public prayer to consist in a certain range of ideas and desires, fully established and stereotyped, and that too, regarded as offered among multitudes of varied spiritual state, and ever varying wants? If words are arbitrarily imposed, without room for the heart to vent itself extemporaneously, then the thoughts must be arbitrarily directed likewise, if the prayer is to be at all heeded; and is it thus that the Inspirer and Spirit of prayer approves of a rigid circle being thrown around the centre of his own operations, especially when the subjects of those operations are immortal souls? Who knows how far the kindling fervour of a minister, aided by freedom of access to the throne of grace, is used by the Holy Spirit to promote the fervour of a Christian assembly? The so much eulogized calmness of Anglicanism, as it is called, is

very suspicious; it is a state of mind not often consistent with earnest supplication. If calmness proceed from the peace of God which passeth all understanding—well, but alas, this is not the privilege of the majority in our Christian congregations. The majority need to be disturbed, not soothed.

What is the import of the following words of St. Jude, xx. ver. “But ye beloved building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and if some have compassion, making a difference, and others, save with fear pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

Are not these words adressed to a public body, the Church? directing the members thereof to the use of church ordinances, and the administration of church censures? Does not the expression, “praying in the Holy Ghost,” collated with the doctrine of Romans viii. 26, imply their praying extemporaneously, though helped in their infirmities by the Spirit;* and since the whole passage applies to a congregation of faithful men, directing them to corporate acts, must not this prayer, from the very nature of the case be public? Let a liturgy be adopted for the sake of furnishing subjects of adoring and humbling thought to the devout, and as an aid to the preservation of the pure truth, but let ample room be allowed for extempore prayer, in order that the blessed Spirit may not have his operations hindered, in

* *Magna est vis συναντιλαμβανεσθαι*, Calvin.

helping our infirmities. Then the ministry has free scope for enlargement of heart, and special pleading importunity, and then a mixed congregation, which nearly all congregations are, will not decline into apathy, by hearing the same forms of expression, until the unbroken uniformity of the service aids the listlessness of the ear, and connives at the deadness of the heart.

In prayer, Romanism, (using the word in its generic sense) proceeds upon the same principle as Gentilism; that is, it teaches the suppliant that he will be heard for his much speaking, and hence the never ending repetition of prayers to the Virgin, and of the Lord's Prayer; a repetition not arising from the increasing faith and fervour of desire of the worshipper, whose very fervour prompts him to come to the Almighty's seat, "there to order his cause before him, and to fill his mouth with arguments," but from a belief that the service itself is an impetratory sacrifice, and that the more weariness and self denial it imposes by its length, the more acceptable and propitiating it is. Romanism never regards prayer as the medium by which a guilty creature comes in the name of Christ, to plead with God for a distinct blessing, and in expectancy of an answer, according to the gospel promise, "whatever ye ask the Father in my name I will give unto you."

Prayers to departed saints are generally stated to be prayers that they would pray; so that as far as any conscious conviction of the efficacy of such prayers is concerned, it is like "sowing to the wind and reaping the whirlwind," for few Romanists, however devoted, expect a clear and distinct answer? Is it even vaguely supposed that the saints can give the Holy Spirit?

Prayers to the Father and to Christ as well, for mercy and grace, however presented with apparent devotion, are never in this system connected with a humble waiting before the Lord for a gracious token of acceptance. No one expects to "obtain" like Abel, "witness that he is righteous." If Romanism allows the penitent and the Christian to believe that he consciously moves God, it sternly precludes him from the consolation of believing that God will consciously move him. It was not long praying, absolutely considered, that our Lord rebuked, for he prayed on one, and perhaps other occasions, "all night," and prayer in many cases, if we would prevail, must be long,—it was the *Gentilism* of supplication which he condemned; the supposition that men would be heard *because* of the *quantum* of service which they rendered, and the maceration and self infliction with which it was attended. The carnal spirit has infused itself into false religions in all its fulness. The Hindu prays to his deities, not to repose trust in their attributes, but to disarm their terrors, to present sacrifice in another form, and to wring from them by wearying repetition of plea, that which he cannot humbly expect, or humbly and confidently claim, by covenant; and so it is with all idolatry. The Mahometan prays, if his address to the Deity may be called prayer, not to deprecate an evil or implore a good, but to fill up a predestinated link in the chain of events which lie between him and his paradise, and partly with a view to secure like the Jewish Pharisees the veneration of men. And some forms of Christian doctrine have been imbued in part with this Gentilism. Romanism absorbs it wholly in its cumbrous round of never ceasing repetitions and forms. Angli-

canism, it is to be feared, is rapidly following in the same track, making no other use of the doctrine of Christ crucified in prayer, than as a precept to crucify ourselves; our penitential sorrows thereby becoming the object of faith rather than He. Socinianism regards prayer as in itself, and by its own virtue, a sanctifying exercise, by which the heart is elevated, and accustomed to devout affections, and the Christian character is formed—a process, in fact, of self salvation. The echo is made to affect the atmosphere !

It is evangelical doctrine alone which fully embodies the Scripture statements on this all important subject. It gives, on the one hand, to prayer all its sublimity, as an act by which a sinful worm enters through the blood of Jesus into audience with God, and proved to be true supplication by its expectancy of an answer : and on the other, by taking it as the instrument or medium of obtaining blessing, this form of doctrine prevents it from derogating from the glory which belongs unto Christ the mediator, and the Holy Spirit the bestower of new covenant grace.

Evangelical prayer comes like the poor woman of Canaan, its prototype. Falling down at the Redeemer's feet, it glorifies his name and proclaims his titles; it fixes its searching eye on his character and attributes, and rises, despite of apparent repulses, from plea to plea, from faith to faith, till it carries away the blessing.

And now, my dear sir, I have freely laid before you those views which I think the Scriptures must indubitably contain, respecting the true nature of the religion of Christ. At the present day they are of infinite

importance. I need not tell you of the mighty movement going on towards that which is external, gorgeous, and formal in religion. The great enemy of mankind has taken advantage of a revulsion in many learned circles from the startling errors of latitudinarianism and the religion of a worldly philosophy, and driven that revulsion in the papal direction. The mighty influence can only be withstood and overborne by our principles. Of the truth of those principles, however unworthily they are here stated and defended, I entertain not a misgiving. I have staked my eternal all upon them. In maintaining them, I have not anxiously to compare ecclesiastical records and documents in search of an authority by which to dictate to my understanding and to govern my faith. "Thus saith the Lord," is the rock on which my ladder with all its steps is placed. I stand on the true foundation of the "prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone." As Protestantism is the representative of these principles, it deserves the gratitude of the world. As long as it is understood to be the cognomen of those views of the essence and nature of the religion of Christ, which are opposed to Romanism, it is useless and mawkish to assert that the term is merely negative. Whatever may be the etymology of the word, Protestantism has had an existence positive enough to be the instrument in God's hands of raising up a host of purer and loftier characters than have appeared in the world since the days of the apostles of our Lord. It has diffused a religion which has met all the wants of men. It has presented objects for their affections, truth for their understanding, and hallowing power for their heart. It has cast upon

experimental religion, (I speak rhetorically), a character of depth and life, which has made the subjects of it at once the wonder and the scorn of the world around. It has enlarged man's heart, and made him mourn over a dying world, producing a love to God and man, in "the bowels of Jesus Christ," which you look for in Romanism or Anglicanism in vain. It is a fire which has run through the outposts of society to the antipodes, and which promises, unless smothered and impeded, to wrap the world in flame! The spirit as it is of Christ's true catholic church and of Christ himself, may it revivify every portion of the visible community on earth, and make it one living temple, that is, one in the unity of life and love. Anglicanism, so called, can no more help fleeing in the end to Rome, than an outcast from a fortress in a time of war can help fleeing, if he would find safety, to the next nearest stronghold. Having left the Protestant gate, and given himself to the guidance of tradition, he must either follow it to its home, or else wander about seeking rest and finding none. When serious and master minds are entangled with Anglicanism, they may, beneath their externalism and *opera operata*, have much secret reservation of true devotion; but when the disciple comes, he will learn the former and eschew the latter, and thus become a deteriorated teacher in his turn. So does the downward movement proceed, like a bright cloud sinking from some mountain height, which becomes more opaque and dark the nearer it is to this lower earth, and at last either settles into a frigid mist, or bursts into a storm. So vital and essential in the religion of Christ are the blessings of conscious justification by penitent faith,

peace with God, conformity to the image of his Son, the love of God and man, the actual communion of saints practised according to apostolic direction, that where these are *there is His church*; yea, though the words "episcopate," "presbytery," "succession," and the whole nomenclature of ecclesiastical things were entirely unknown.

I am, my dear sir, in the joint hope with you of a better and brighter day,

Yours, &c.

III.

As angels glide, on plumes unseen,
From earth, to breathe their native air;
Lord! let this heart in longing keen
Rise wafted on the wings of prayer.

Be still this hour, and lone this place!
I come to live, yet learn to die:
If seraphs speak with veiled face,
The voice of man is vanity.

How silent! when on yonder sea
The evening breeze has slept away;
So let this pause within me be
A prelude to the judgment day.

What, though I fear! I flee no more;
Fleeing is not from thee to move;
'Tis here I see life's latest shore,
And vast eternity above.

My closed eye and ear deny
All earth-born trifles to intrude ;
To bring that greater blessing nigh,
The pardon'd heart's deep quietude.

I speak to thee with trembling tone ;
And, lest a sigh should 'scape thine ear,
The Spirit breathes it farther on,
Nor Holiness doth interfere.

My lips purge not my heart, nor fall
My refluent words as heav'ns own air ;
Can hunger fill these longings all ?
Or echo still the atmosphere ?

The place of pray'r, Thy rest and mine,
Where want and fulness blended be,
Is where Thou mov'st to make me Thine,
And where a worm of earth moves Thee.

This hour, my sign of failing life,
But shadow of Thy deathless years,
With immortality is rife,
And fleeting time itself endears.

The lions seek their quiet lair,
The birds their nest at even-tide :
O! let me have my place of prayer,
Sole Eden by the world supplied.

LETTER XIV.

Christian Parties.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE state of Christian parties at the present moment is such as to inspire every good man with seriousness and anxiety. The Evangelical Churchman, though preaching the same doctrines of the Cross with the Methodist, looks upon the whole system of Methodism as a mighty piece of supplanting rivalry; while the High Churchman, overlooking its energy and spread, coldly involves it in his indiscriminating condemnation of sects. The Methodist looks upon the Established Church as a community in which truth and error, spirituality and externalism, worldliness and religion, are practically struggling for the supremacy; though in an arena every where distinguished by the symbols, at least, of truth and holiness. The Evangelical Dissenter, though nearer than the Methodist to the Churchman in doctrine, by reason of his Calvinian views, is further off in actual sympathy, by reason of the Churchman's connection with the state; while the Churchman, in return, viewing the hostile position of the Dissenter against an Establishment to which he is enthusiastically attached, and which he considers a safeguard against national

infidelity, draws himself into the narrow circle of frowning exclusiveness. So is the household of God divided, very much to the delight of infidelity, and the exultation of Rome.

All devout and thinking men are beginning to be convinced that some kind of Christian union is necessary to be realized at some period ; not only that Papists and infidels may be deprived of their beloved argument against evangelical religion, but that the Church may be in a position to fulfil the design of her Lord. Our Lord, in his last prayer, pleads that believers may be one, in order that the world may believe in his own mission. John xvii. 21. Knowledge, you will allow, may be increased, and good may be done in many isolated places, by isolated churches ; but no great impulse can be brought to bear upon the world until there is first a united state of the Church universal. We gather from the tenor of our Lord's words, that it is such a union as shall be more felt than seen,—such a union as subsists between Him and the Father, which does not consist in the blending of persons, and the confusion of functions, but in the participation of the same divine nature, and the pursuance of the same designs ;—such a union too as subsists between Both and believers, which is spiritual, ineffable, and as anti-formal as thought can realize. Such is the whole scope of the 17th chapter of St. John, so often quoted by piecemeal, and misapplied.

The so much wished for union of the Church is not then to consist in uniformity, nor is uniformity to be a necessary adjunct of it. Popery, with its earthly head and ultimate human authority, is the only consistent exposition of the theory which makes unity to consist in

this. And yet, though visibility is not the principal circumstance, Christian union must be visible, in order that there may be an outward impression made upon the world, as well as a secret and spiritual influence derived, the force of which, lies in increased unction and strength.

Christian union must be mutual recognition. Churches which stand side by side with each other, each one having within its pale, regenerated men, bearing the evidences of regeneration, must open their pulpits each to the other, in all cases which shall be deemed desirable, or necessary; and mutual prayer and communion, must often be employed to seal the recognition so confessed.

Methodism has taken so important a stand amongst the religious communities, that her voice has a right to be heard in the controversy. For one, I strongly assert that her position, in relation to the Church of England, ought not to be that of a penitent and suppliant, even if the Church had some spiritual gift to impart which Methodism had not in possession. Methodism from the first, by the Church, has been persecuted and ill treated, though Methodism itself was the direct and irresistible result of the preaching of the more spiritually minded and zealous of her own sons. Methodism has been made independent as a Church, just as an ardent child is made independent by a cold mother, who drives her out of doors and casts her upon her own resources. The first Methodists, at least, did not leave the Church, (as indeed they persuaded themselves they did not leave at all,) without casting many a lingering look behind. They did not leave until they had asked for every thing which

the Bible empowers them to ask, a spiritual ministry, Christian fellowship, and liberty to snatch brands from the burning, and in every case were denied. Thus a parent, which refused a parent's part, could be obeyed no longer. Yet, as she is our parent, the relationship must not be forgotten. No ill treatment on her part could justify such forgetfulness; and if, for the sake of bringing the parent and child into friendly conjunction, any arrangement could be made which would not trench upon, or lessen in the least, the spiritual privileges of our people, or interfere with the free and unfettered pastorship of their own ministers, to me it would seem desirable. It would be a great joy to many of us, to see the energy and spirituality of Methodism transfused into the evangelic portions of the Church; a flame would be kindled which would soon reach those higher grades in society, to which, at present, from the state of prejudice which exists, we, as Methodists, have no access; and on the other hand, it would be a dark day for the Vatican for the two to walk together again and to be agreed. Let Christ be preached as our only priest; His Cross as our only altar; faith in His blood as our only instrumental medium of pardon; holiness of heart and life, as our only meetness for final acceptance; and the whole system of tradition, aided by as much learning and talent as can be brought to bear, will be found utterly unavailing to Romanize the Church.

Moreover, Methodism is actually and formally a church. No sooner did Mr. Wesley die, than every circumstance, spiritual and temporal, contributed to bring it into this condition.

A pressure from the people, joined to other causes,

compelled the Conference to exercise their formerly unexercised right of giving the Lord's Supper. Thus they became a pastorate, and having taken the office, they were obliged to maintain it. They saw further than their people, and perceived that this step would lead to other steps. If a man lays the foundation of a house, and continues building, he will, if he has a design in regard to the future, naturally produce walls, and roof, and furniture. Accordingly, all the history of the struggles of the Conference, with democratic feeling on the part of ambitious men, is explained. The Methodist ministers saw that they only existed in their present position, and could only continue to exist, as a church; and hence the giving of sacraments infallibly led, as all who are conversant with these things will allow, to formal ordination, the administration of baptism, and the Theological Institution. The Methodists have preserved and cherished the work of God by becoming, under the sanction of Divine Providence, a church; and therefore, as a church they lift up their voice. The Tractarian and the Romanist may both be assured they will not be able to swamp and destroy it, as long as its ministers and flock prove faithful; for there is an energy and vitality in it of which they at present form no conception,—(some, indeed, seem hardly to have the glimmering of an idea on the subject),—and so long it will exist, either isolated or connected. The people are too ardently attached to it to part with it on any account. It is administering the word of God in every great division of the globe,—it is planting the seed of a thousand future harvests,—it is favoured by the smile of God,—and it is hard to think how men can

contend against it without contending against Him.

Uniformity is a dream, not only opposed to St. Paul's simile of the body and members, but to the constitution of human minds existing in a probationary state.* When the Spirit of God operates upon a certain order of minds, there is zeal for God and a love for souls produced of so ardent a character, that it rises above the considerations of established order, when that order is constructed so as to damp the flame ; and therefore the result of this is Methodism ; however it may develope itself, or however it may be controlled, there it is, it is Methodism ; and the best way to preserve the inestimable benefit is to turn it into a sphere of its own. I use the word Methodism in its generic sense, and as applied either to the established clergy or separatists. Minds of another order, and under the same influence, are chiefly affected with convictions of the supreme authority of Christ in his church, as its sole head and governor ; and hence are uneasy in proportion as human beings and human influence are employed in the application of that authority, or in hindering its application :—the result is evangelic dissent, and so long as

* “ Unity in diversity, and diversity in unity ; such is the law of nature, and such also is that of the church.....Divine unity has rights, so too has human diversity. In religion, neither God nor man must be nullified : if you have no unity, the religion is not of God ; if you have no diversity, the religion is not of man : now it ought to be of both. Would you erase from creation one of the laws imposed on it by God, that of immense diversity ? *Even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be known what is piped or harped.* (1 Cor. xiv. 7.) But if there is in religious matters a diversity springing from difference in individual character, and which, consequently, must subsist even in heaven, there is another which arises from man's revolt, and this is a great evil.”—D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation, Part iii. 334. Whitaker, 1841.

it is content with its own position, without assailing that of others, it is best for peace and truth that it should have a sphere of its own. Methodism and dissent have appeared before, but they have perished under the hand of uniformity. Thus, let each spiritual product develop its own spiritual results in its own way, and every part of the Church is kept vital. In this way, the Church, as Christ's mystic body, obtains, so far as the manifestation of mind is concerned, her eye, her ear, her hand, her foot, her heart; and derives the benefit of their mutual offices. Assign, if you will, the Episcopal Church an intelligent function, the Methodist Church a laborious one, the Presbyterian and Dissenting Churches a vigilant one—a post of attention and sacred jealousy, still we have only the complete idea of a body from their conjunction and mutual recognition. The theory of uniformity, when extended to human particulars and arbitrarily enforced, has always either quenched the especial kindling of sacred fire in the Church, or has expelled it, and has thereby lost the benefit. My calm and solemn conviction is, that no uniformity like this is contemplated in the New Testament. Luther was a Methodist, and Popery heaved him from her cold bosom. The Waldenses were dissenters, but they were too weak for their enemies, and their light was quenched in death. The Tractarians of our own day are, in some respects, virtually Presbyterian, for, instead of acting upon the ancient maxim, “Do nothing without the Bishop,” they have taken the lead in a Romanizing movement, and are reflecting upon the Bishops for not moving with them. Strict uniformity, therefore, is only a theory, and a theory never to be practised in an imperfect and

probationary state. To suppose that the Episcopal Church of this country could comprehend all evangelical and orthodox religious communities within her pale, without controlling their movements, and modifying their manner of teaching, would be to play with a chimera; and to put those communions into such a position, would be to realize the fable of Procrustes, the body would die, because of the mutilation and distortion of the members. The close of the whole matter is mutual recognition. When two or more churches meet on the same territory, mutually blessed with regenerated and believing members, and with tokens of the divine approbation, it must no more be deemed a schism, than when two battalions on the same side of a deadly conflict, meet to withstand the enemy, and guard the spot from his advances. We must compact our churches. Infidel democracy, and Romanism, are in the field; and are preparing their deadliest attacks against the walls of Zion. Those being fallen, every thing precious and sacred follows. If our phalanxes are strengthened, it must not be by fusing them into an indisposed mass, and introducing them to strange communities—but by preserving each division under the voice of its own leader, and yet, by mutual intercourse, making the whole one.

In such a state of things, what manner of persons ought ministers to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Our people are what we make them.

We may learn, even from Oxford, a lesson of devotion, self-denial, and zeal. Let us be more in the closet—more with God. Let us bear with patience the sneers and vituperation of levellers on the one hand, and the

cold and haughty opposition of High Churchmen on the other. The one will say we swell, the other will say we crouch ; the one will say we lean to the Church, the other will say we go farther from it. Public men must seek to please God, and in pleasing Him, they sooner or later are sure both to please and to benefit those who are most like Him.

I am, my dear sir,

Yours affectionately,

LETTER XV.

Reverence for Divine Things.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT must be conceded to our opponents, that many of them manifest a reverence for divine institutions and ordinances, which, in this age of latitudinarianism, presents an edifying example. It must also be conceded that the laxity into which many evangelical Christians had previously fallen in this respect, neglecting sacraments and fasting and prayer, greatly tended to accelerate that movement of externalism which has proceeded so rapidly; and of which, for the last ten years, they have been the leaders.

The English Church felt the impulse of the revival of religion which began in the last century, not by receiving a portion of its fire, for that would have been equal to an acknowledgment of the divine and genuine character of the visitation; but by being roused to a conviction that either something must be done to maintain hold of the spiritual sympathies and affections of the people, or else that hold would be forfeited for ever.

The most anxious of her sons, looking round the non-conforming religious community, and yet, overlooking

those lineaments of the image of Christ which were to be found in thousands therein, fixed their attention on its weakness—its neglect of devotional decorum in conducting divine service, its liability to sectarian disturbance; and its frequent employment of unlearned men in the service of the sanctuary. Accordingly, they have endeavoured to revive the obsolete canons and ordinances of the Church; and to draw from antiquity, whatever in doctrine or practice, might strike the attention, obtain the awe, and secure the affections of the people at large. They have endeavoured to draw life from the Church, in the ordinances of which they seemed to have regarded it as slumbering, instead of seeking it directly from God, who is its Author and Giver; and who, by imparting himself to individual members, in his regenerating, peace giving, and sanctifying plenitude, would thereby impart life to the drooping body. This fatal mistake is the first of a series of wrong steps, like the first paces of By-path Meadow, in the Pilgrim's Progress, which insensibly led the traveller to a dangerous bourn from which he might not come back again. The consequences of this mistake, in the present instance, no man may safely calculate.

Still, whatever is truly and not superstitiously reverential in their religion is to be imitated; and there is the more hope of accelerating the day of final union and love, if we are as anxious to copy the good that is in them, as to exhibit and confute what we think are their dangerous and destructive errors. Methodism has had chiefly to sustain the charge of irreverence, and therefore to its bearing upon ourselves my remarks are directed.

It must be confessed that some time ago, amongst portions of us, low views had prevailed of the Christian ministry. A man who could speak fluently on the common places of Christian theology, and who had an ordinary degree of piety, was regarded as eligible for the office. Special governing wisdom, a holy yearning after light and love, a knowledge how to apply the principles of the Gospel to the ever varying phases of human nature and human life, and that kind of zeal which is too expansive to be cramped by the use of mere conventional words and phrases,—were too much overlooked as pastoral qualifications. Hence a minister was regarded as a speaking brother, and nothing else; and of course, if he were required to be nothing else, all gifts which went beyond this qualification were regarded with much indifference.

Low views of ministerial fitness and of the pastoral relation, would of course be associated with similar views as to the necessity of personal sanctity and devotedness, among ministers; for if it were admitted that a minister need not be much wiser than others, not having to stand in the relation of leader and guide, the same admission would grant, he need not be much holier,—much more dead to the world, and more compassionate to the souls of perishing men. In conformity with this spirit, the Local Preacher amongst us has sometimes made too little of that important office for the fulfilment of which he has received a gift, and to which office he is outwardly called by that pastorate under which he exercises it. This has been done by allowing too frequently, the most unlikely, ignorant, and inexperienced persons to intrude into his own proper functions; throwing the barrier

down betwixt himself and mere neophytes among the people: and on the other hand, a few cases have perhaps occurred, in which imperfectly taught Local Preachers have spoken and acted as though their permission or outward call to expound the word of God and the doctrines of the Gospel, in a subordinate manner, involved a right to exercise every spiritual function; thus making a separated, (Rom. i. 1, 1 Tim. iv. 15), specially gifted pastorate,—an ordinance of God, superfluous. Both these cases have savoured of irreverence; they have made too much of man, and too little of God,—too little of those divine gifts which the Holy Spirit apportions to each member of the Lord's household (1 Cor. xii.) "severally as he will," and by which every *διακονος*, that is to say, every minister or servant in the church is kept in his own place, from the door-keeper to the pastor, and by which the order of the church is manifested, and the voice of its outward call is guided. There has been too a want of reverence in the administration of baptism. A child has been sprinkled with water, in connexion with a garbled use of the Service Book, in a manner which has indicated that the administrator considered it rather as a troublesome though proper ceremony, than as an ordinance at which he expected God to be present: though at the same time this irreverence comes short of the profanity which is perpetrated when a surpliced worldling is the administrator. A hurried and thoughtless mode of conducting the services of the other sacramental solemnity, has likewise, in some Methodist congregations, betrayed the same comparatively undevout use of divine things. Such are our confessions,

rather strongly stated, perhaps, but not more so than the interests of truth require.

Yet all this is not fairly chargeable upon evangelic, or upon Methodist doctrine. It is rather chargeable upon the previous want of a prevailing practical evangelism in the Church. That an awakened community could endure, or that Providence could permit, the slumbering continuance of such an unspiritual ministry as disgraced the last century, is too much to suppose ; and if it pleased God extraordinarily to call other and humble men to supply the lack of labour thereby occasioned, we cannot wonder if they did not quite so well understand their position, as they would have done, had they come to established institutions with a canonical rule to walk by.

Had the Church been spiritual and evangelical everywhere, feeding hungry souls with the manna of God's word, and exhibiting the embodied gospel in the lives of her clergy, then no interruption to the usual order of things would have taken place. No men then, extraordinarily introduced into the ministry, would have been liable to the temptation of measuring the importance and sanctity of their new position, by the humbleness and secularity of that from which they were taken ; though, how far this temptation may have operated in the case before us, no one can tell. It is highly probable that preachers themselves may have first formed low views, and then have imparted them to the people ; for the people in all religious communities naturally receive what impress their ministers give them. This is a stedfast moral law, and will never pass

away; but, conveying a benefit on the one hand, in the case of a wise and good ministry, and affixing painful responsibility on the other, it will abide till the day of judgment.

Take, however, a true minister of the Lord Jesus,—one whose character stands in harmony with the sentiments contained in these letters,—one who is represented by well remembered examples that have passed in review before our eyes,—both among the living and among those who are now numbered with the dead,—and our views respecting his character and office, I am persuaded, in point of being reverential, will bear being compared with that of our opponents.

With regard to the ministries of the church, we believe them to be various, founded by those “diversities of gifts” which emanate from the “same Spirit.” 1 Cor. xii. 4.

Some persons, by their practical wisdom and benevolence, are fitted to scrutinize and control the temporal interests of the church, and provide for the relief of the poor,—such are Methodist stewards and Congregational deacons. Some are qualified by a fervent and affectionate piety, for directing the actual and more private communion of God’s people, and inciting them to diligence and holiness,—such, doubtless, were those “women who laboured with Paul in the gospel,” and such are Methodist leaders, and such to some extent are many of the evangelical Church of England visitors of the sick.

The Giver of all grace imparts unto some laymen the power to preach or expound the Scriptures, and with Baxter we believe that this, in cases of need, is properly

and lawfully done, as long as "they do not live or preach from under the government of the church pastors, but, being members of their flocks, do all as under their lawful oversight and guidance."*

Such was Origen, such are licentiates in the churches of England and Scotland, and such are Methodist Local Preachers.

And we believe, in the last place, in that special gift of wisdom, of spiritual influence, of teaching unction, of power, love, and a sound mind,—which marks the pastoral minister, and which, or the initial evidences of which, the Church is bound by law of Scripture to look for, before it presents the candidate for ordination. Present to us an individual so adorned and gifted, and he is revered for his *work's* sake. There is no factitious mystery, no transcendental importance thrown around him, as there is around the Tractarian minister, who may, according to the teaching of his school, be invested with the still more sombre veil of doubtful morality, as the Popes were, and yet retain his ministerial character.

Our minister is not regarded as a sort of dispenser of salvation, for our doctrine regards all the ministries of the Church as engaged in saving souls; and, although the highest office may well be supposed to be most efficacious in this particular, yet, the precise degree in which each ministry contributes to the effect, will never be ascertained until we awaken into the light of eternity. Such, I say, is the evangelical pastor, revered for his

* Christian Directory, Part 3, Qu. 59, Sec. 4.

work's sake, for his likeness to his Master, his heaven inspired knowledge, and apostolic spirit. Such were the first Methodist preachers; though they were humble they were not low men; and in their hallowed presence, many persons of high temporal station felt their inferiority: and if the truth were to be spoken, the feelings with which the Church of England people regard their heavenly minded and spiritual pastors—those who have successfully declaced to them the word of God, are much more deep and sacred than those with which they contemplate the everlasting declaimers in favour of succession, ceremony and ritual. We do not revere the ordinances of Methodism as comprising an everlasting miracle, an extraordinary institute intended to be a sign and a wonder for ever, for that which is extraordinary cannot be enduring; to assert the opposite would be a contradiction. We revere them because of their conformity with the means pointed out in the New Testament, by which the Lord Jesus has determined, in all ages, to gather sinful men out of the world, and save them, and train them for his eternal kingdom. They are means, which being instituted by the same authority and with the same design, must be essentially the same every where, and finding which among ourselves in connection with the end which they propose to attain, the Methodist connection is confidently concluded to be a branch of the Catholic Church of Christ: extraordinary in its rise, but afterwards ordinary in its settled operation.

Christian order is the line in which all true religious movements place themselves, and usually it is only when churches depart from the Truth and the Life, that the external order is disturbed.

I think it must be conceded too, that a degree of irreverence has marked our proceedings in reference to chapels and places of worship. In the interior of many, there is no passage of Scripture inscribed, no words that "God spake," taken either from law or gospel, to distinguish them from secular buildings; or which would prevent them without the least alteration from being used for Socinian or for worldly purposes: and in others, there is no proper accommodation for administering baptism and the Lord's Supper. In some, Tea Meetings have been held, and that indignant rebuke of the Apostle's has been forgotten, "What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." 1 Cor. ii. 22.

In justification of this, I will say nothing; only as this irregularity is regarded chiefly as it attaches to the system of Methodism, I will simply point out how it arose. It arose in connection with other circumstances which may likewise, by some, be deemed both irreverent and irregular, and which were all themselves connected with our former anomalous and unavoidable position. Originally the Methodists professed themselves a part of the English Church. The chapels were then called "preaching houses," because it was assumed that those who frequented them, attended the parish Church; a building in which full worship was understood to be conducted, and therefore, was regarded eminently as "the house of prayer." Then, the ministers were simply called preachers; because it was assumed that the parochial minister had the chief authority in matters of religion, and that the Methodist teacher was a

subordinate helper, raised up to supply his lack of spiritual service. Then, no provision was made either for the baptism of infants, or for their evangelical training when they came to mature childhood and youth; because it was assumed that they were first baptized at the Church, and afterwards catechised by the minister in order to confirmation. Then, the Connexion was called a society, because, as I have just said, it was assumed to be a sort of religious, though somewhat anomalous order within the pale of the Church itself. Thus, on the ground of these assumptions, and taking it for granted that Methodism was to be a permanent institution, it followed of necessity on our separation, that a number of needful and Scriptural ordinances remained uncompleted. On separating from the Church, we changed our position without changing our nomenclature. Those, among ourselves, who talk of our returning, as far as outward things are concerned, to first principles, (for it is conceded that in other respects there is no need to return, we having never departed from first doctrinal principles) would be the very first to shrink from those principles, if they fully understood them. As far as primitive simplicity signifies that pure, fervent, unworldly, apostolical love which characterized the first Christians,, and the first Methodists; we cannot pray too fervently that it may remain and prevail; but if it is made to signify the fewness and plainness of Methodist institutions, they forget with what elaborate arrangements that primitive simplicity was associated.

Such is the origin, in part, of our irreverence. Men, cast suddenly into new circumstances, and made to form institutions which to them are new, cannot at once form

a proper estimate of their sacredness Had the Church received and cherished us, she might, perhaps, have saved us from a certain kind of irreverence, but probably at the risk of the ruin of our zeal.

The question of places of worship and of external ordinances, however, is a subordinate one.

If evangelical religion does not cherish the highest reverence for that which is truly and essentially divine, then its facts and biographical records are most misleading. It reveres the word of the Lord as "full of majesty," seeks to imbibe its spirit, and places human tradition at an immeasurable distance. I have read many pages of Tractarian writings, and with some portions of gospel truth, have met with abundance of clouded statement, asceticism, and mystery ; but I have met with nothing of the yearning compassion, the expansive charity, the burning zeal of St. Paul ; who, instead of reserving the doctrine of the atonement, held up to the eye of both Jew and Gentile, both learned and ignorant, the illumination which radiated from that intense centre, and glorified every object on which it peacefully rested. There is nothing here of his noble disregard of fables and genealogies, and of his never-ceasing recurrence to the theme of Christ crucified for our sins,—the Spirit given for our sanctification,—the intelligent, joyful, and practical holiness, resulting as in his own case, from a present salvation from sin, and consequent communion with God. Such things might never have been spoken of in the New Testament, for aught we can find in this school. There is nothing of the heavenly and edifying wisdom of St. Peter, whose precepts are continually based upon previous Scripture,

nothing of the strongly lighted, unequivocal morality discoursed of by St. James,—the unfailing result of Christ formed in the heart, the hope of glory ; nothing of the seraphic affection of St. John, who beheld in true Christianity the prevalence and prelacy of one temper, just as we behold in the material world the analagous relation of one solar light, and who no sooner realized the glorious truth that God is love, than he recognized the fact that it was an infinite and germinant truth to be evolved, applied, and reflected in every circle of the Christian system. We have nothing of this. And yet, if Tractarian doctrine be the true religion, which Christ came to establish upon earth, ought it not to answer with Scripture as face answers to face in a glass ? Or at least, ought it not to exhibit some recognized copy of that fair original ? Ought not its leading traces to be the prominent indications of the mind of the Spirit ?—ought it not to present in bold relief a concern for the glory of God, and for the destruction of sin and evil, and love to the souls of perishing men ? Alas ! what is so scarce as these features.

Evangelical doctrine at least reveres these vital truths of inspiration, however imperfectly its professed disciples may embody and illustrate them. It would fain turn its face to the Scripture orb, as flowers turn to the sun, and would drink in every ray, and copy every lineament. If it can find one word of our Lord, or of an inspired apostle of His, on any anxious subject, it turns with interest to the spot, and values that word, not only beyond thousands of gold and silver, but beyond the most ponderous volumes of erring men ;

on the principle that a syllable of inspiration is of more value than any given amount of human writing. Evangelical doctrine directs its hushed spirit to the sacred Voice, and says, like Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." The angels in heaven do *immediately* behold the face of God, and yet they are no less reverent than we on earth, who in our worship, so to speak, veil ourselves. It is possible, therefore, to approach the written word as humbly and reverently, when we draw near and learn from it directly, as when we go through the medium of doctors and fathers.

This is intelligent reverence,—that which commands the understanding more than the imagination, which captivates the whole soul rather than entrances a few morbid affections,—a reverence which deepens with deepening views of the truth, and which rejoices and adores with a progressive experimental acquaintance of its sanctifying power, until human nature is fully restored to that Divine image, the loss of which is its chief misery. We revere the work of the Spirit. We are so convinced that His agency is paramount in the work of raising up and qualifying ministers, that we should not knowingly ordain to our ministry a worldly or unconverted man, even if the hands of all the bishops in the land had been laid upon his head: we are so assured, that it is He who "convinces of sin," and thereby gives godly sorrow, that we should disregard the most ascetic austerities, the most severe discipline, as penitential tokens, if we saw no traces of yielding the heart to His influence. We so fully recognize Him as the Comforter promised by the Father to fulfil the Father's part, that we should discourage the penitent

soul from taking consolation from the most solemn form of absolution that the purest church on earth could pronounce;* and should exhort him to turn from the words of man, and wait in the spirit and exercise of prayer, until He, the Holy Ghost, the convincer of sin, should further reveal and apply himself as the Spirit of Adoption, with all his love and peace.

In like manner we should be exceedingly suspicious of that holiness which only manifested itself in a subdued demeanour, and in eleemosynary deeds, and did not appear to flow from the vital source of a hallowed and renewed heart; embodying itself in ceaseless efforts for the divine glory and the good of man, and attracting to itself and to a share in its sympathies, whoever or whatever was like God in the world around. And with regard to divine influence, we do not think of it as a fixed something which calmly slumbers in the ordinances,—ordinances, with which we are to soothe ourselves, and in the observance of which we are to rest! but rather as an unbounded treasure of light, and power and love,—“gifts obtained for men,” and which, according to the principles of Christ’s administration, are imparted in proportion to the measure of our faithfulness and earnestness in prayer; and in seeking to obtain which, we use the ordinances as means of

* The binding and loosing power, given by Christ to his apostles, was simply a transference of the teaching authority from the Jewish doctors to themselves. As these latter were keys in token of their office to unlock or open the sacred books, so the apostles were said to receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven—they were commissioned to declare on what terms God accepted and pardoned sinners—Romanism and Tractarianism on this simple foundation have built their doctrine of Church Absolving Authority.

drawing near to God, rather than as assuming that God is contained in them. This, I would again repeat, is intelligent reverence,—a reverence which cries with the humbled but thankful patriarch, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I repent and abhor myself in dust and ashes.” Job xlii. 5, 6.

Tractarian doctrine, with all its professed love of primitive times, is not sufficiently primitive to rejoice in the power and triumph of the day of Pentecost, and in the ardent and pure love which then wrought such victorious wonders. It never looks for a repetition of that BAPTISM OF FIRE which was both real and typical,—(real as it was powerful to save at the time, and typical as it contained the promise of succeeding illapses,)—although the original promise stands good to children as well as fathers, and to as many as God shall call; and it scornfully turns over every page of Church history where a vouchsafement of the blessing is recorded, in order to search for the true church in a succession of ungodly men who understood as little of the nature of these sacred visitations, as did the mocking Jews at Pentecost themselves. On the other hand, we are taught to be always waiting on God, eyeing that little cloud which has gathered in the distant horizon until it spreads over all the sky, and at last pours forth showers of blessing. We are taught to believe that if in the spirit of love and zeal, of union and charity, of faith and prayer, every great and effectual door be entered by the messengers of the truth, and that if every where holy hands be lifted up without wrath and doubting;—that then saving grace will reach our ungodly country-

men, the ponderous superstitions of India will fall, and with them the shackles and the woes of millions;—the children of Africa be regenerate and free—the powers of evil quail—and a religion of holiness and peace diffused through the world!

How earnestly do I wish that every Tractarian, and every other professor of Christianity, might enjoy its sanctifying blessings in their own case; yea, though Methodism itself, as far as it implied a separate community, were lost and merged in the fulness of the visitation! These lines are written with bitter convictions of personal unfaithfulness; an unattained standard presents itself to my eye, and whether it may yet be realized before life is ended, I know not; but certain I am, that prayer, mighty prayer, ought to pervade our solemn assemblies, and that a separation more definite than heretofore must take place between us and the world. The ministry of the present generation must form the character of that which is rising. The Spirit must be poured from on high in regenerating and quickening influence, or man will corrupt the truth of God as he always has done when that influence was wanting.

Common-place characters in the ministry will no longer serve the interests of truth and holiness, for the labours of the present time are not common-place labours. The strife thickens, and every year there is a stronger tendency of every movement to the centre of conflict, and the decision of the battle of Almighty God. “Arise O God plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies; the tumult of those

that rise up against thee increaseth continually." Psalm lxxiv., 22, 23.

We require our houses of prayer to be filled with pleading worshippers; our pulpits with gifted and believing ministers, preaching with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; our vestries with catechumens—the children of our congregations, in order that they may be trained in the religion of their fathers. We require that our men of talent should give a portion of their time and energy to the concerns of the church, in order that their temporal affairs may be sanctified; that our men of wealth should give of their substance to provide chapels and means of grace for a secularized and heathen population, as well as to enlarge and accelerate missionary triumphs through the world; and that our men of teaching ability should ply their sacred labour with redoubled diligence at the Sunday school: we require that our homes should be actually what we wish our churches to be,—scenes of love and peace: that our hearts by constant closet prayer should be kept stayed on God, and filled with the love of Christ; and that we all—those who can contribute, and those who cannot—those who are high, and those who are low—those who teach, and those who are taught, should, on the appointed days of fasting and prayer, make such a fervent believing application to the throne of grace, as that a blessing should be poured out, which there would not be room to contain. O that the great day had arrived! O that the world were filled with God, and that envy, malice, and strife were no more! Light is breaking upon the world; our missionary operations are far extended, and they are all blessed and divinely

prospered. We have spread out the light to a vast circumference, and therefore, the flame at the centre must kindle up more high and bright, in order to maintain the illumination and increase it. The idolatrous systems of the East are undermined—the kingdom of God is opening upon Southern and Western Africa—the labours and sacrifices of years are rewarded by a simultaneous movement in favour of the Gospel. Sanguinary and ferocious chiefs in the interior are pleading for Christian instruction—the slave trade is menaced at its source—Popery is aroused from its slumber—and we at home are fast verging to an unprecedented conflict with the infidel principle on the one hand, and the idolatrous principle on the other. We want no hierarchichal pomp, no worldly state, but rather union, love, and peace; apostolical simplicity and zeal, connected with stable institutions for the defence and perpetuation of the truth. The final issue is not uncertain. Whoever make war with the Lamb, the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and they that are with him, are “called, and chosen, and faithful.” Rev. xvii. 14.

I remain, dear Sir, finally, yours.

APPENDICES.

I.

Bishops not superior to Presbyters as to the Power of Order.

BISHOP STILLINGFLEET in commenting on the letter of Jerome to Evagrius, which treats on this subject, says, "The clearest evidence of this is in the Church of Alexandria, of which Jerome speaks: *Nam Alexandria à Marco Evangelistâ usque ad Heracleam et Dionysium Episcopos, Presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, &c.* That learned doctor who would persuade us that the Presbyters did only make choice of the person, but the ordination was performed by other Bishops, would do well, first, to tell us who and where those Bishops in Egypt were who did consecrate or ordain the Bishop of Alexandria after his election by the Presbyters; especially while Egypt remained but one province, under the government of the Præfectus Augustalis.

"Secondly, how had this been in the least pertinent to Jerome's purpose, to have made a particular instance in the Church of Alexandria for that which was common to all other churches besides? For the old rule of the canon law for Bishops was, *Electio clericorum est, consensus principis, petitio plebis.* Thirdly, this election in Jerome must imply the conferring the power and authority by which the Bishops acted. For, first, the setting up of this power is by Jerome attributed to this choice, as appears by his words, *Quod autem postea unus electus est qui cæteris præponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est, ne unusquisque ad se trahens Christi Ecclesiam rumperet.*—(Advers. Lucil.) Whereby it is evident Jerome attributes the first original of that *exsors potestas*, as he calls it elsewhere, in the Bishop

above Presbyters, not to any apostolical institution, but to the free choice of the Presbyters themselves: which doth fully explain what he means by *consuetudo Ecclesiæ*, before spoken of, namely, that which came up by a voluntary act of the governors of churches themselves. Secondly, it appears that by the election he means conferring authority, by the instances he brings to that purpose: as the Roman armies choosing their Emperors, who had then no other power but what they received by the length of the sword; and the Deacons choosing their Archdeacons, who had no other power but what was merely conferred by the choice of the colleges of Deacons. To which we may add what Eutychius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, saith in his *Origines Ecclesiæ Alexandrinæ*, published in Arabic by our most learned Selden, who expressly affirms ‘that the twelve Presbyters constituted by Mark upon the vacancy of the see, did choose out of their number one to be head over the rest; and THE OTHER ELEVEN DID LAY THEIR HANDS ON HIM, and blessed him, and made him Patriarch.’ pp. 29—30. Neither is the authority of Eutychius so much to be slighted in this case, coming so near to Jerome as he doth; who, doubtless, had he told us that Mark and Anianus, &c. did all this without any Presbyters, might have had the good fortune to have been quoted with as much frequency and authority as the anonymous author of the martyrdom of Timothy in Photius, (who there unhappily follows the story of the seven sleepers,) or the author of the Apostolical Constitutions, whose credit is everlastingly blasted by the excellent Mr. Daillé, *De Pseudepigraphis Apostolorum*; so much doth men’s interest tend to the enhancing or abating the esteem and credit both of the dead and the living! By this we see that where no positive restraints from consent and choice, for the unity and peace of the church, have restrained men’s liberty, as to the external exercise of the power of order or jurisdiction, every one being himself advanced into the authority of a church governor, hath an internal power of conferring the same upon persons fit for it.”—Sillingfleet’s *Irenicum*, pp. 273—275. Second edition.

II.

Fanciful Expositions of the Fathers.

TAKE Tertullian on Baptism. Almost at the commencement of his Treatise, he finds all the titles of our Lord combined in one single word, which, though highly irreverent and ridiculous in itself, is made to bend to the drift of the subject. The word is *ιϋθυς*, (referred to before in the letter on "The Fathers and the Church of England,") and represents in its initial letters the titles as follow,—“Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Saviour;”—and hence the signification of the word being Fish, and associating with it the idea of water, he asserts that Christians are born in the water, and are pisciculi, little fishes, and that they cannot be saved but by remaining in the water.—Tert. on Bapt., 1. Proceeding with his subject, he asserts the natural and original sacredness of water,—its being the seat of the Divine Spirit, and hence a more gracious element than the rest; for when they were rude and unformed, it was the only liquid substance, always perfect, simple, joyous, pure of itself,—a worthy vehicle it lay before the Lord: Ibidm. 3,—that the waters thus being sanctified by the presence of the Spirit, drank in the power of sanctifying. Ibidm. 4.

He asserts that Israel's bitter waters were rendered sweet by the rod of Moses; that, that rod was Christ, who heals the channels of our bitter and poisoned nature by the salutary waters of baptism; and tracing all the events in the history of our Lord in which he was concerned with water, and those discourses of His in which the idea occurred; referring to His baptism, its being the substance on which, in the first miracle, His Divine power operated; and then to his inviting the

thirty to drink that water which He should give,—he concludes its literal and intrinsic sacredness. Ibidm. 9. All this when wrought out with taste, might furnish matter for a poet; but when taken as the severe and didactic rendering of God's holy word,—the comment which shall be the Church's guide,—who would not wish to be rather left to the simple majesty of the inspired text, resolving its difficulties by reference to co-inspired portions? Besides our author is often so obscure, and his meaning involved in doubt, that we require other scholiasts and interpreters to explain him. If we must needs go to Rigaltius, or others, to explain Tertullian, the father does not stand in an advantageous position as an expositor of Scripture. Tertullian adverts to the fact that individuals coming from the baptismal water were anointed with the unction of "the ancient discipline," which Rigaltius explains as meaning *Judaica*, the Jewish; so that we have here Judaism unscrupulously revived in despite of the interdict of Scripture. This father seems to regard the spiritual effect to concur with the three several circumstances of Baptism,—immersion, unction, and imposition of hands,—and yet leaves it to be inferred that the ordinance is incomplete except these three rites do themselves concur.—Tert. on Bapt., p. 8.

ERRATUM.

Page 159—Note—for ουσίας read θυσίας.

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3. 20

Barrett, Alfred

Catholic and Evangelical principles, viewed in their present application
to the Church of God: in a Series of letters to a friend

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